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Standing room only: Full of Ducatis and other Italian bikes, this is just one room in Peter Calles' home. Page 26.



PHIL AYNLEY

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ON THE WEB!

Ready to race?

Ad man Shane Powers is nearing the finish line, or more accurately, the starting line. His "Sea Beast" Honda CB350 will soon be finished, as he prepares to take the AHRMA Roadracing School beginning on Friday, June 28, as AHRMA racing comes to Heartland Motorsports Park in Topeka, Kansas. The engine runs, the suspension is hung, and bodywork is in process. A belly pan is being built, and soon it will be safety-wired and ready to race! Follow along at MotorcycleClassics.com/AHRMA-CB350-Part-5



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Onward and sideways

Welcome, friends. Last issue in this space you read about the changes going on around here, yet despite a slightly-less-old guy behind the desk, the song remains the same. The only minor change this issue is you now get to read the drivel of not one, but two *Motorcycle Classics* editors. Founding editor Richard Backus speaks his mind on Page 78, where he'll pen a regular column each issue about his riding exploits, what bikes in his small stable have or haven't broken, and his views on who knows what else.

Over the years while attending events with the magazine, I've met and spoken with many of you, and I look forward to meeting the rest of you as we move forward through show season. Join us at Road America, July 27, for the Rockerbox show, or better yet, come to Seven Springs, Pennsylvania, for the 4th Annual Ride 'Em, Don't Hide 'Em Getaway (see Page 12). Richard swears he's going to join us, and I intend to put him to as much work as possible. (I kid.)

For those of you I haven't met yet, how we got this far is a funny tale. Back in 2005, I was an editor for the only *other* publisher in town, which specialized in floral magazines. I'd done an internship there during college, and they offered me a job when I graduated. An ad in the local paper alerted me one day to a job listing for an editor position with *Motorcycle Classics*, then just a startup. I mentioned it to my girlfriend (now wife) Marie, and commented that I wasn't so sure about jumping to a title that was brand-new and unproven, despite my love of motorcycles (and bicycles before that). Marie saw it for what it was: an opportunity that couldn't be passed up. Soon I had an interview with Richard. I brought my résumé and a book of photographs of all the bikes I'd bought

and sold. Years later he admitted he never read my résumé (he'd forgotten his glasses). He figured if I'd worked at another magazine for two years and hadn't gotten canned, it'd work out. The album of bikes was enough.

When I started, we were just finishing the second-ever issue, November/December 2005. Here we are, more than 13 years and some 82 (!) issues of the magazine later. You might say I know how the sausage is made.

Anyway, back to that album of photos. Like many of you, I've had a bunch of bikes over the years, more than 30 by

now, and they've all come and gone (save the two in my garage, a 1973 BMW R75/5 and a 1974 Norton 850 Commando). And I'd guess, like many of you, there's one bike you wish you'd kept.

The one I miss most is my 1976 Honda CB750. I bought it while Marie and I were dating. It's the first bike I ever took her out riding on, and I even had it at our wedding (hence the silly photo from

2006). I never intended to sell it, but I wanted something modern to do real touring on, and funds were tight. I still occasionally send an email to the guy I sold it to, but I've never heard back from him. I keep an eye on the local Craigslist, hoping it will pop up. A 1976 model with a dented tank and faded original paint, I had it painted a wild metal-flake orange reminiscent of the stock 1974 color.

If you've got a story about the bike you wish you'd never sold, send me an email at lhall@motorcycleclassics.com. Even better, If you've got a hi-res photo of the bike, send that along too.

And if you know where my CB750 went, help a brother out.

Cheers,

Landon



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“The stories triggered a flood of memories.”

Unusual CB350

I'm a longtime reader and subscriber of your magazine, and I am excited to write to you regarding an old motorcycle I recently fixed up.

My son and I like recently bought a 1968 Honda CB350 from a local estate sale. However, it's not a normal CB350, and we were told from the previous

owner's brother that it's a police model that he had imported from the U.K. Unfortunately, being that we bought it from an estate sale, we didn't get any documentation with the bike.

The bike had been sitting for years, but was complete and in decent shape. We cleaned it up and performed all of the maintenance the bike needed. We

want to keep the bike as original as possible, even if that means leaving some patina. The bike has the CB77 style gas tank with chrome panels, long front and rear fenders, a headlight bucket with an integrated speedometer and switch for the lights, front crash bar with red and blue lights, and a rear luggage rack with a ticket box and blue light. It's a pretty cool

RIDERS

Rider: Dave DeBaene, Moline, Illinois

Age: 66

Occupation: Manufacturing engineer, John Deere (retired)

Rides: 1938 NSU 501 OSL

Dave's story: "I have been a motorcycle enthusiast since I was 12. I started with a scooter my oldest brother found for me. I raced amateur flat track for four years before I married. My first race bike was a Hodaka Super Rat. I also raced a Bultaco 175 Sherpa, and 250 and 350 Pursangs. After having kids I quit riding until my daughter graduated from college (2001). I then purchased a 1975 Harley-Davidson FLH project bike. Just before retirement I built a Honda FT street tracker, and then a 1980 Honda CB750 café racer. I started motorcycle restoration with a 1972 Bultaco Pursang. Since then I have restored seven more bikes, and I just started on a 1951 Triumph 6T Thunderbird. I help in maintaining the bikes for the Moto Armory museum collection. I have acquired most of my projects from the museum.

"The NSU I restored was originally to be sold at the 2018 Mecum motorcycle auction in Las Vegas. The bike looked really rough but it appeared to have good bones. I loved the looks of the bike (even in the condition it was in). I must admit after initially buying the bike I had some concerns that parts availability would be a problem. I found a source in Germany (NSU-Schoenhaar) that I relied on for most of the parts. The bike is titled as a 1938 but, after sending the frame and engine number to NSU-Schoenhaar I was told the frame is 1940, and

motor matches 1939 production numbers. My first purchase was a parts list and service manual. Unfortunately the parts list and manuals are printed only in German. Since then I have made good use of my translator app. One of the first things I noticed was the bike's rear brake pedal and actuator splines were stripped. Neither were parts I could buy new or used. I purchased a Honda CB750 brake pedal and shaft spline to machine in order to incorporate into a working brake. After looking over the bike it appeared most of the parts were functional. It appears after the rear brake splines were stripped, the bike was parked. That may have been a good thing in that may have kept the bike off the road and allowed it to become a survivor. Some of the other adaptations for the restoration were making a kidney shaped contact point cover, making a new rear taillight mount and making replacement hardware (mostly 8mm). As with most restorations, hardware gets damaged and or replaced with incorrect hardware. For many of the 8mm hardware on this bike I machined new nuts and bolts to best represent the original. All of the hardware was sent to Billmark Plating in Fort Worth, Texas, for cadmium plating.

"Some of the changes from stock include new rims from Central Wheel (the original rims were too pitted to reuse), spokes from Buchanan's Spoke & Rim, leather tool box covers from Heather's Leathers, paint by Jim Bantz, and pinstriping by Vickie Racer, Big River Custom. New cables were made from new-old-stock Wassell cables. The coverings best match the vintage look that I want."



Dave's 1938 NSU as purchased (left) and after a thorough restoration (right), including machining of some new parts.

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Reader Mike Koontz is looking for information on this police-spec 1968 Honda CB350, which he recently purchased.

looking bike, and I've never seen anything exactly like it. From the research I've done, Honda made both a "K0 domestic model" CB350 that looked like this, but without the police parts, and a "P0 police model." The CB450 and CB750 police bikes have a "P" in the VIN, but my research suggests that the CB350s never got the "P" VIN. Neither the domestic model nor P0 were originally sold in the U.S., so I'm having trouble finding out much about the bike, and would greatly appreciate any insight from readers.

Mike Koontz/via email

Readers,

Please email Mike at jmk015@gmail.com with any information you may have regarding his bike. — Ed.

Long-lost Vincent

This is a bit of a long shot and I'm sure you get these requests all the time, but I'm looking for my grandfather's bike. He's been in quite ill health and finding its whereabouts would be the boost he needs. Currently I know that the bike is registered offroad. There are no customs notices so I presume the bike is still in the U.K., but the VMCC have no registered owner since 2003. Any help would be massively appreciated. The tag appears to read 00D 607.

Anna Skeates, Ringwood, England/
skeatesanna@gmail.com



Z-1 mailbox

You will likely receive dozens of responses from former, and current, owners regarding the 1973 Kawasaki Z-1 article by Dain Gingerelli. The bike is gorgeous and the stories triggered a flood of memories for me. It was 1974 (19 years old), and I was in the U.S. Army in Colorado when I got my brand-new Z-1. I loved that bike! Now I am retired with lots of time to pursue new challenges and the timing of Dain's article couldn't be better. I have enclosed pics of my latest project for your amusement: a 1973 Z-1 mailbox.

Richard Snyder/via email

Richard,

That is something special. Readers, before you cry heresy, the tank was unusable before this process was begun. "It is actually a 1980 KZ1000 tank that was dented, scraped and rusted," Richard says. "Milkstone cleaned it up. The front was widened and raised slightly, then Bondo'd. I didn't really commit until I worked out a functioning door that wouldn't slice open the mailman. The petcock is a vintage Suzuki part that I had laying around, adapted of course." Too cool, Richard! — Ed.



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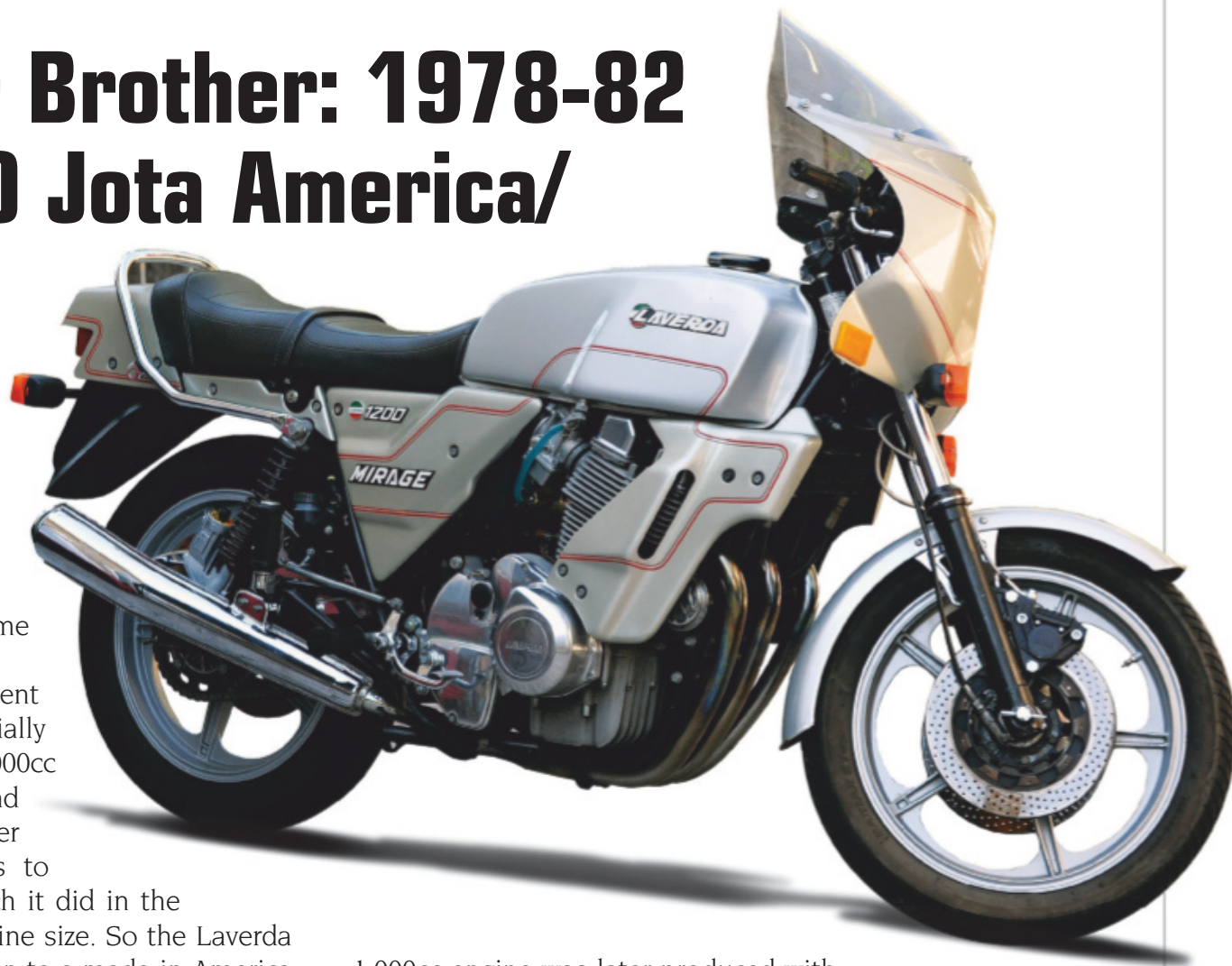
Dramatization. Always wear protective eyewear.

Jota's Bigger Brother: 1978-82 Laverda 1200 Jota America/Mirage

Many bike makers produced stand-out models that became synonymous with the brand. BSA had the Gold Star; Triumph, the Bonneville; Moto Guzzi, the Le Mans. For Italian builder Laverda it was a 1,000cc DOHC triple that, at its launch in 1976, was the fastest production motorcycle then available and became a legend in its own time: the Jota.

Through the 1970s, increasingly stringent noise and pollution regulations (especially in the U.S.) meant Laverda's raucous 1,000cc triple required more restrictive intake and exhaust as well as softer cams and lower compression. Laverda's challenge was to maintain its performance edge — which it did in the time-honored fashion of increasing engine size. So the Laverda 1200 of 1978 was a made-in-Italy solution to a made-in-America problem. All Laverda triples up to 1982 used a built-up crankshaft running on four roller main bearings (ball bearings were tried but abandoned), with chain drive to two overhead camshafts operating six valves by shim-under-bucket followers. Three Dell'Orto PHB pumper carburetors fed fuel, while a triplex chain drove the 5-speed transmission. The dual cradle frame ran, at first, on wire-spoked alloy wheels with Laverda drum brakes, but these soon gave way to FLAM alloy wheels and triple Brembo discs. Suspension was by Ceriani and Corte e Cosso, or (later) Marzocchi. To sidestep concerns about Italian motorcycle electrics, Laverda chose components from Bosch and Nippon Denso.

For the 1200, bore was increased from 75mm to 80mm giving a swept volume of 1,116cc. It retained the Jota's 180-degree crankshaft, meaning the two outer pistons rose together, while the center piston fell, and vice versa. So the 1200 had the same characteristic 1-2-3-miss exhaust beat. And though the



1,000cc engine was later produced with a 120-degree crankshaft, all Laverda 1200s used the 180-degree crank, meaning they echo the Jota's "hammering, fast-paced booming exhaust racket," *Cycle Guide* said.

The first 1200s were sold in the U.S. as the Jota America. The gas tank acquired a "coffin" shape; the patented adjustable handlebars were swapped out for conventional bars; and the final drive chain was beefed up to a 630 O-ring type. A modified frame changed the rear shock angle and relaxed the steering geometry. For 1980, the 1200TS and 1200TS Mirage featured a large handlebar fairing, fiberglass "lowers," and a new tail section with a grab rail, making its sport-touring intent clear. While the Mirage was supposed to offer more performance than the stock TS, the differences in the engine were minor. U.S.-spec models used touring A12 cams and quieter, more restrictive mufflers. The final version of the 1200TS Mirage for 1981 included an uprated Nippon Denso alternator with ignition pickups moved to the primary case.

ON THE MARKET 1982 Laverda 1200 TS Mirage



In all our hunting, we found just two Mirages that have come up on the market. Finished in maroon, a rare factory color, this 1200 TS Mirage was offered for sale back in 2018 at the Bonhams Las Vegas motorcycle auction. It had a pre-sale estimate of \$14,000-\$18,000, which may explain why it went unsold. Believed to be a two-owner machine, it was offered in unrestored condition. Manufactured in September 1981 as a 1982 model, the bike was built to U.S. specifications and featured an 80mph speedometer. It showed just less than 11,000 miles and was presented in "close to 'like new' cosmetic condition." Another Mirage, but not a TS, sold at the 2019 Mecum Las Vegas auction, for \$5,500. Labeled (incorrectly) as a 1983 model, it wore a non-stock Cowley 3-into-1 exhaust and appeared to be in original, unrestored condition, but details were few. Let's just say there aren't a lot of Mirages around!

"It's an exciting, highly emotional motorcycle that is thrilling to ride."

LAVERDA 1200

Years produced	1978-1982
Power	73hp @ 7,500rpm
Top speed	133mph (period test)
Engine	1,116cc (80mm x 74mm) air-cooled, DOHC inline triple
Transmission	Triplex chain primary, 5-speed, chain final drive
Weight (wet)/MPG	545lb (248kg)/38mpg (avg.)
Price then/now	\$1,995 (1977)/\$3,000-\$8,000

Originally a manufacturer of agricultural equipment, Laverda's heritage shows through in the 1200s. They're tall, brutish machines with heavy controls; but also durable, reliable and strong. With firm suspension, a forward riding position, and buzzing vibration, city riding can be a chore. They require some muscling through tight curves — but once leaned over they're remarkably steady and unfazed by braking inputs or pavement changes. With the soft U.S.-spec cams, performance is mellow but perfectly adequate, and the under-stressed engine's generous torque makes for relaxed touring. All of this speaks to

Laverda's outstanding record in endurance racing, where lasting the course is more important than outright speed. As *Laverda Twin and Triple Repair and Tune-up Guide* author Tim Parker notes, Laverdas are "built to stay built." Parts are also available from Columbia Car & Cycle in Nakusp, British Columbia (laverda.ca).

Cycle Guide summed up the 1978 Jota America: "It's an exciting, highly emotional motorcycle that is thrilling to ride, fun to corner and stimulating just to be near, even though making it work is a high effort proposition. On a Jota, you are a 100-percent participant, not a lifeless body along for the ride." **MC**

CONTENDERS Four-cylinder alternatives to the Laverda triple

1978-1981 Yamaha XS Eleven

In our time of incremental enhancements and "bold new graphics," it's difficult now to appreciate the rate of technical innovation in the 1970s with each manufacturer trying to leapfrog the competition. But while Honda and Suzuki had 4-valve heads by the end of the decade, Yamaha stuck with two until the FJ1100 of 1984.

Instead, the tuning-fork guys used Yamaha's Induction Control System (YICS) featuring "polyspheric" combustion chambers. The XS Eleven was for a while the fastest, most powerful, largest displacement DOHC four on the market. It was also king of the quarter-mile in 1978, when *Cycle World* recorded under 11.8 seconds. It was in the twisties that the wheels — almost literally — came off. Wrote *Cycle* magazine, "We could turn it. ... We could stop it. But we couldn't simultaneously turn it and slow it down."

But on the highway, the XS Eleven's rubber-mounted engine, shaft drive, and "comfortable, day long ride posture" made it a superb touring bike. Wrote *Cycle* in 1978, the XS Eleven is:

"The most appealing, enjoyable street motorcycle we've ridden in quite a while. It is so civilized, so loaded with nice touches, so smooth and so contemptuously, casually powerful."

- 1978-1981
- 95hp @ 8,000rpm
- 136mph (period test)
- 1,101cc air-cooled, DOHC inline four
- 5-speed, shaft final drive
- 602lb (274kg) wet
- 40mpg (avg.)
- \$2,989 (1978)/\$2,500-\$6,500

1980-1983 Suzuki GS1100E

While the Laverda is the contrarian's choice in this class, the Suzuki is the no-brainer. Though they were late into 4-stroke fours (the GS750 of 1977), Suzuki was first of the over-1,000cc fours with 16 valves. Said *Cycle* magazine in 1982, "the GS1100 is the standard yardstick in Superbikes."

Above the TSCC (Twin Swirl Combustion Chamber) cylinder head were two overhead camshafts operating the 16 valves by locknut-adjustable rockers. Below was a built-up crankshaft and roller bearing bottom end developed from the GS850/1000. Four 34mm CV Mikunis fed fuel, which was lit by transistorized ignition. But it was probably the better balance between sheer power and competent handling that gave the Suzuki its competitive edge.

In spite of showing lower horsepower than its other Japanese competitors, the GS1100 won most drag strip shoot-outs because it was easy to launch and "doesn't overpower its chassis," *Cycle World* said. The revised 1983 GS1100ES version with narrower valve angles was the first production motorcycle tested by that magazine to run a standing quarter in the tens. And it was voted fifth "most significant motorcycle" from the previous 35 years by *Rider* magazine.

- 1980-1983
- 108hp @ 8,500rpm (1983)
- 140mph (period test)
- 1,074cc air-cooled DOHC 16-valve inline four
- 5-speed, chain final drive
- 552lb (w/half-tank fuel)
- 38mpg (avg.)
- \$4,350 (1983)/\$2,000-\$6,000



Ride 'Em, Don't Hide 'Em Getaway, Vintage Motofest and a new Destinations book

Prepping for Pennsylvania

Plans are coming together as we get ready for our biggest and most exciting event of the year, our 4th Annual *Motorcycle Classics Ride 'Em, Don't Hide 'Em Getaway* at Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania, Aug. 9-11, 2019.

Friday night we'll kick the event off with a welcome reception and dinner. After breakfast together Saturday at the resort's Slopeside restaurant, we'll gear up and head out for the Saturday ride. Routes are still being planned through the highlands, but we aim to head south this year toward the quaint historic town of Oakland, Maryland, where we'll take a break for lunch and a chance to check out the museums, shops and more. Then we'll saddle back up for a nice afternoon ride back to the resort, where we'll gather for a special banquet dinner and an interview with Dain Gingerelli, discussing his racing, riding and writing career. After another breakfast Sunday morning, we'll head back out for another ride through the Laurel Highlands, returning to the resort sometime midday.

If you still need a bike, Ride



Bikes lined up at lunch in 2018. 2019 Guest of honor Dain Gingerelli (right).

sponsor RetroTours has a limited selection of classic 1970s motorcycles available for rent, including bikes from Ducati, Triumph, Norton, Yamaha, Honda, BMW and more. Check out the 25-strong stable at retrotours.com, but don't wait too long, because rentals are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Want to pile on even more miles? RetroTours will lead a 600-mile round-trip tour to Seven Springs from its headquarters in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, through the backcountry of Maryland, West Virginia and

Pennsylvania. Contact the fine folks at RetroTours, or visit their website for more info on the round-trip ride.

We'll also be joined by our good friends at Bonhams Auctioneers (bonhams.com), Pecard Leather Care (pecard.com) and Spectro Performance Oils (spectro-oils.com), passionate motorcycle enthusiasts and enthusiastic sponsors of our event. Reserve your spot now at MotorcycleClassics.com/PA2019, where you'll find updates and interactive ride routes as we get them posted. See you there!

Vintage Motofest

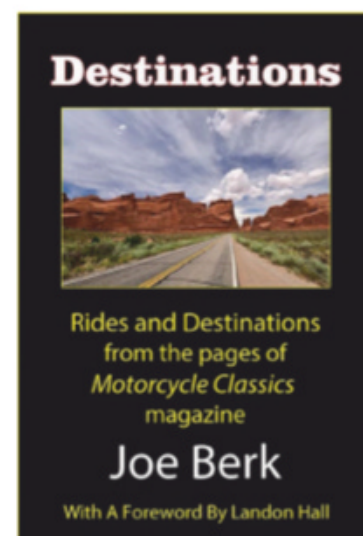
Summer is fast approaching, and with it comes a host of motorcycle events. Make plans now to join *Motorcycle Classics* for the Vintage Motofest featuring AHRMA Vintage Racing and Rockerbox, July 26-28, 2019, at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. We'll be there hanging out and also taking care of the

judging for the annual Rockerbox Bike Show on Saturday. Awards will be given away in five classes, plus the *Motorcycle Classics* Editor's Choice award. Check out the vendor village, live music, available sunset cruises on the track, food, a microbrew tasting and more. Get more info at roadamerica.com

Destinations, by Joe Berk

Paul Cézanne said, "Were it not that I am passionately fond of the contours of my country, I should not be here." Cézanne painted landscapes, but Joe Berk lives in them. A compendium of Berk's travel writing for *Motorcycle Classics' Destinations* since 2006 is now available in print. The book is as much a resource for the sense of adventure widely shared by motorcyclists as it is a testament to his passion for the contours of North America, visiting every corner of the U.S., and some spots in Mexico. From Berk's first commissioned piece on the Rock Store in Cornell, California, Joe swiftly became a regular *Destinations* contributor.

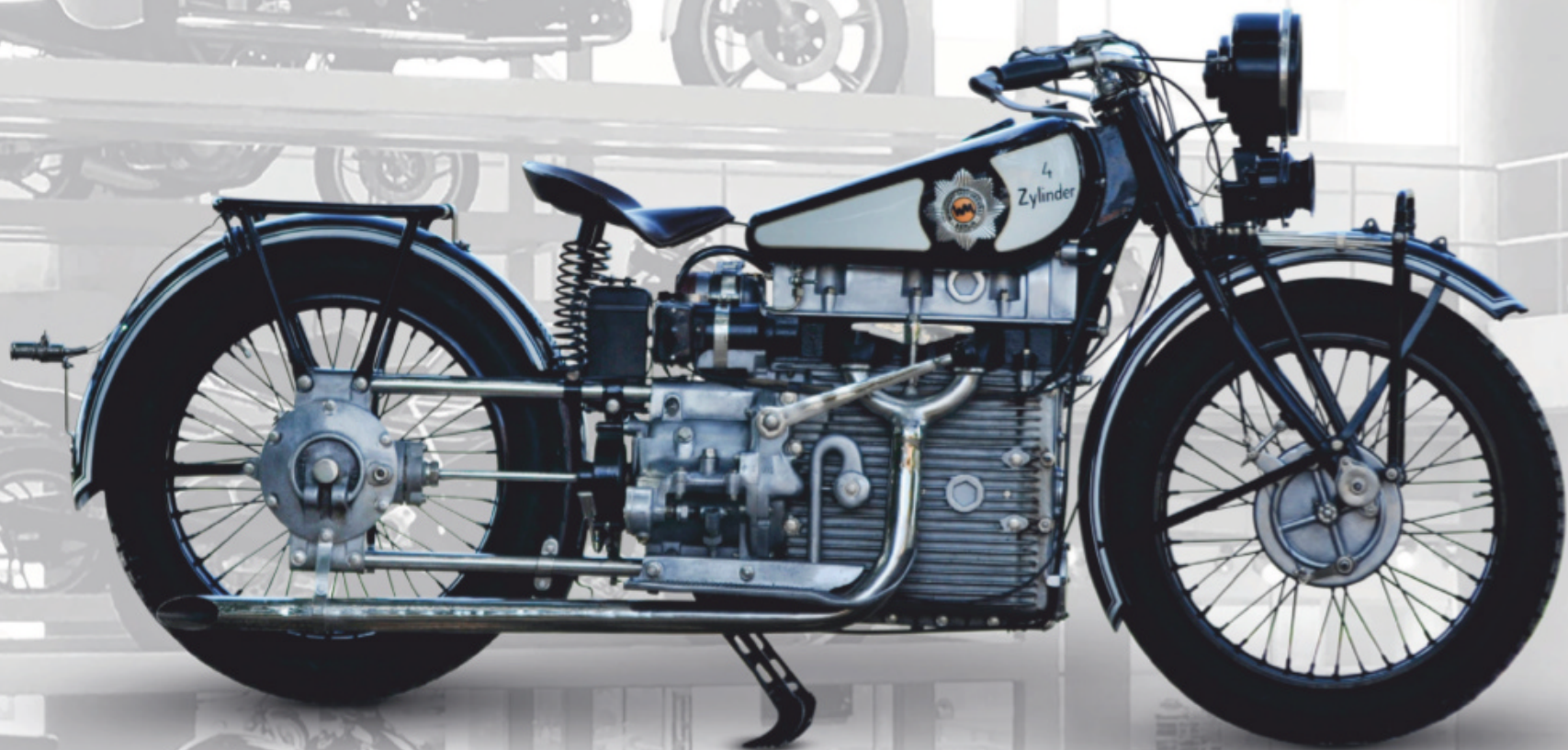
The book is an authentic blend of motorcycling pilgrimage sites (e.g., the National Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa, Iowa) and well-known monuments, parks and other museums around the country. Berk's taste for adventure is evident, as popular destinations are contrasted with obscure, but pleasant rides and "best kept secrets." This travelogue is made unique by Berk's focus on motorcycling as the means and the end of travelling. Riders will appreciate advice about what to avoid, where to ride and what to stop and enjoy. \$12.95 from our store. Online at MotorcycleClassics.com/store — Kyle Hayden



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BEFORE THE GOLD STAR

1934 BSA 350 Blue Star

Story by Margie Siegal
Photos by Nick Cedar

About three years ago, Kim Williams was with a group of friends at the late, lamented British Clubman's Show, which up until 2018 was a much-looked-forward-to event in San Jose, California. Kim is a master welder and likes to ride and rebuild motorcycles in his spare time, which is limited due to the number of people with broken frames and hard luck stories who flock to his door.





One of the features of the Clubman show was a sale corral. "Have you seen the Blue Star?" asked Dan Bockmeyer, friend of Kim and a Britbike stalwart. Dan Smith, the restorer and owner of this prewar classic, had come down from British Columbia to sell this BSA. Kim figured Bockmeyer would buy the bike, but later he saw Smith wandering around the show. Kim asked Smith if he had sold the bike. Smith said that Bockmeyer wouldn't pay his asking price.

Kim wanted that bike. "I'll take it," he said. There was a little problem of payment. The show was on Saturday, Kim couldn't get enough cash out of the bank before Monday, and Smith wanted to go home Sunday. Kim offered Smith a check. Smith was not about to take a check from someone he didn't know. "Who will vouch for you?" Luckily, Kim had more than a few friends present who knew Smith as well. "I will!" said Frank Recoder, another Britbike aficionado. "If Frank will vouch for you, you must be OK," Smith said. The deal was struck. Kim has been enjoying his little single ever since.

From rifles to bicycles

The Birmingham Small Arms company, which began in 1861 producing rifles for British infantry, branched out into bicycle manufacturing in 1880. Bicycles led naturally to motorcycles, and the first BSA motorcycle appeared for sale in 1910. The BSA Co. stressed reliability and affordability. Until the late 1950s, automobiles were too expensive for the average English working person, who either got to work on a motorcycle or took public transportation. Economy and the ability to start up every morning were the main selling points for motorcycles in England, and BSA was good at giving people what they wanted. One of the company's slogans was, "One in four is a BSA." For a time, BSA owned the largest motorcycle factory in the world.

The first Blue Star models appeared in 1932. England was suffering through the Depression at the time, but BSA had deep pockets, and rode out the downturn in sales. At the time, BSA's lineup consisted of single-cylinder and twin-cylinder overhead valve and sidevalve machines, in states of tune from basic to sporty. The larger-capacity bikes were mostly intended to haul sidecars, a substitute for automobiles for the less-wealthy British. The twins were mostly V-twins, and many had sidevalve



1934 BSA 350 BLUE STAR

Engine: 348cc air-cooled OHV 4-stroke, single cylinder (twin exhaust ports), 71mm x 88mm bore and stroke, 9.5:1 compression ratio, 18hp (est.)

Top speed: 75mph (est.)

Carburetion: Single Amal 276 carburetor

Transmission: 4-speed, foot shift, chain final drive

Electrics: Lucas magneto and generator

Frame/wheelbase: Twin downtube cradle frame/ 54in (1,371.6mm)

Suspension: Leading link sprung forks, dual legs with single spring front, rigid rear

Brakes: 7in (178mm) drums front and rear

Tires: 3.5 x 19in front, 100/90 x 19in rear

Weight: 360lb (163.6kg)

Seat height: 28in (711mm)

Fuel capacity: 2gal (7.5ltr) (est.)

Price then/now: £70 (\$350) (est.)/\$2,500-\$7,500



top ends. Sporty vertical-twin engines were still in the future.

Blue Stars had an enameled star on the timing cover, which signified more aggressive cams and a higher compression ratio than other bikes in BSA's lineup. Like many motorcycles of the period, the single-cylinder overhead-valve engine had two exhaust ports, each ending in a separate muffler. The purpose of the twin exhaust was to improve exhaust flow, and some modern bikes (such as KTM) have this feature. Kim says that the exhaust pipes barely heat up, pointing to the like-new condition of the chrome. The 1934 Blue Star came in 250, 350 and 500cc models. Kim's ride is a 350 (actually 348cc), advertised at the time as "The Sporting Blue Star." Dan Smith says that it was intended as an introductory competition bike, with a more aggressively shaped combustion chamber.

Practical and popular

Despite the economic conditions, the Blue Stars proved

popular. One selling point was the claim of longer maintenance intervals than many British bikes of the period — a whole 200 miles without breaking out

the tool roll!

The first Blue Stars were foot clutch and handshift operated, but the 1934 machines had a hand clutch and a 4-speed foot-shift gearbox, an improvement first introduced by the English Velocette company in 1929. The other British factories saw Velocette's innovation was practical and popular, and came out with their own versions in the following years. Kim says the transmission works surprisingly well.

The valve springs are exposed, due to the limits of 1930s technology. Period oil was low quality, and would leave carbon deposits on the top end, which had to be scraped out once a year. Keeping tiny oil passages from clogging up would have been a struggle. Instead, the rocker arms and many other areas on the bike were fitted with Zerk grease fittings. Dan told Kim to go over the top end with a grease gun every few months and





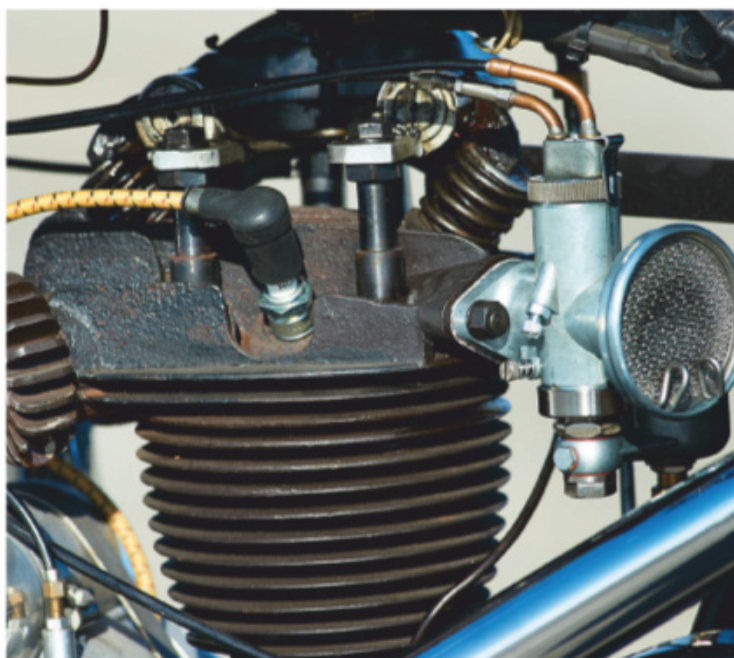
the rest of the bike once a year.

There is an oil feed that drips oil on the intake valve stem. The owner's manual cautions that when the rider takes off, they should see a little blue smoke, indicating that the oil feed is working properly and oil is getting to the valve.

Motorcycle factories also had to contend with bad valve spring steel. Broken springs were a constant problem until World War II, when advances in steel alloys produced a reliable material for valve springs. Prewar, the solution was to expose the valve springs, in the hopes that the air stream would keep them cool. Even the absurdly expensive Brough Superiors ("The Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles") had exposed valves. On the other side of the Atlantic, the valves on Harley-Davidson's overhead valve Knucklehead, introduced in 1936, had very minimal valve enclosures, and did not get full valve enclosure until 1938.

For 1934, the Blue Star was quite advanced. Besides the hand clutch, foot shift and overhead valves, the Blue Star sported a recirculating wet sump oil system. At the time, all American bikes were hand shift, most American road-going bikes had sidevalve engines, and Harley-Davidsons had total-loss oil systems. Indian had gone to a dry sump system in 1933. Before World War II, BSA believed in quality control, and Kim says that his pre-war BSA barely leaks. He uses Torco

20/50 motorcycle oil, made for modern motorcycles. Kim says the wet sump holds a lot of oil. There is no oil filter.



No valve enclosure meant frequent valve spring replacements until improved alloys came along. The Blue Star uses a single Amal 276 carb.

On the road

The girder forks, according to Kim, work surprisingly well. They are studded with grease fittings and sport a steering damper and adjustable side pieces. However, the springs under the saddle don't do much to take the bumps out of the road (and English roads of the 1930s were much bumpier than contemporary American roads) and the hardtail ensures the rider will feel every change in road surface.

Few motorcycles had rear suspension in the 1930s, notably Vincent in England and BMW in Germany. The problem was that designing a frame with rear suspension that will hold the road, especially at speed, is not easy, especially if the price of the motorcycle has to be kept low. BSA put its motors in a plunger frame after World War II, and went to a swingarm frame in the early Fifties.

In 1936, BSA bumped up the performance of the Blue Star line, and renamed the bikes Empire Stars. Shortly afterwards, ace British designer Val Page revamped the whole Blue Star/Empire Star line. The new bikes had a new, lighter frame, dry sump lubrication, and more protected electronics. In 1937, well-known racing star Wal Handley entered an Empire Star 500 in a race at Brooklands and

The 348cc air-cooled single produced a mean 18 horsepower, good for a top speed of 75 miles an hour.

won with an average speed of over 102mph. Lapping the Brooklands track over 100mph entitled you to a Gold Star lapel badge. BSA took full advantage of this feat.

The next year, BSA announced the Gold Star, with an aluminum alloy engine, as its top-of-the-line clubman competition machine. The Gold Star was based on the Empire Star, which makes Kim's little machine a direct ancestor of the BSA Gold Star. Competitors won races on Gold Stars until the early Sixties, and surviving Gold Stars are sought after.

Some Blue Stars and Empire Stars made their way to North America. In the 1930s, the only British motorcycle importer in the United States was Reggie Pink in New York, but there were several Britbike dealers in Canada, then, as now, part of the British Commonwealth. Dan Smith says British motorcycles were being sold in Canada at least by 1915. This Blue Star was imported to Canada when new. Dan Smith found it in the back of a school bus. "I gave it a full mechanical overhaul. It was actually pretty simple, since most things that came with the bike were there." Smith's idea of "pretty simple" may be a little different than most. He had to fabricate the exhaust, the girder fork brackets and numerous other parts. "It's just what you have to do."

Getting it legal

The first hurdle Kim faced with his new bike — which ran well on delivery — was getting it registered. The Department

of Motor Vehicles was not happy with the Canadian title, and threw up a few roadblocks. Eventually, Kim worked through all the red tape, and rode the bike down to the local office, where the staff made sure the numbers matched and issued Kim a brand-new license plate. Kim doesn't think it goes well with the girder forks and the exposed valves. "I'm trying to find a vintage license plate — I know one is out there!"

After a couple hundred miles, the bike began slipping out of time. Kim took the timing mechanism apart and noticed a gear was slipping on the idler shaft. Repairing a Lucas magneto is a job for a specialist, and Mickey Peters in Bakersfield, California, rebuilt the component with a new tapered shaft on the armature. However, the problem was a blessing in disguise, as Kim says, because when he took the dyno off, he noticed a little seal that had been added to the oil pump had worked its way out of position and was damaging the cases. Kim quickly fixed the problem and reassembled the motor. He thinks the carburetor is wearing out and should be replaced, and is having the Amal carburetor company in England assemble a new period-accurate carburetor.



With nice handling and moderate speed capabilities, owner Kim Williams enjoys piloting his Blue Star. "I love riding this bike. It has personality."

Once the dyno was fixed and reassembled to the motor, the Blue Star has been dependable (despite the Lucas components — the English drink warm beer due to Lucas refrigerators) and surprisingly enjoyable to ride, despite Kim's concerns about the carburetor. "I can ride the bike hard — the twin ports wick away heat and the engine runs cool, even though it is made of cast iron." Like all bikes of the era, the Blue Star is kickstart and requires a starting drill. Kim has been filling the tank with premium gas. To start the bike, you turn on the petcock, push the tickler on the carburetor until gas drips out, and kick three times. "It likes a lot of gas." You then crack the choke a third open, retard the timing (left grip) a quarter turn, prod the kickstarter until the piston is up to top dead center, pull the compression release and give it a good kick. "It should fire."

Once the engine is warmed up and burbling away, Kim can take off on adventures. "It doesn't accelerate fast, but it will cruise up to 55-60mph — good enough for the slow lane on



the freeway. It has a long stroke and runs at slow rpm. I can ride it hard, and it doesn't mind at all. It handles nice. It's pretty nimble. The front end soaks up the bumps, but with the hard rear end, you are really wired to the road, and feel every bump. The single leading shoe drum brakes stop the bike, but they aren't great — I would say they are marginal."

"I really like riding this little bike. Actually, I love riding this little bike. It has personality. It's fun to ride." **MC**



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DOWN AND DIRTY

A vintage racing
weekend with two
of the cruelest
bikes ever devised



Story by John L. Stein
Photos by Seth DeDoes

In the smash documentary, *Free Solo*, about climber Alex Honnold, researchers performed an MRI on Honnold's brain to see how his hippocampus alighted when Alex viewed stressful imagery. The minimal activation revealed why he might free climb Yosemite's 3,600-foot vertical El Capitan alone, and without ropes: Some people just need more stimulus to feel fully alive. Coupled with nostalgia for the golden era of motorsports, this surely drives many vintage racers — car and motorcycle alike. Myself included.

There's no comparing a 1970s Porsche 911 and a modern Carrera, or a solid-axle Corvette and a C7. They carry the same nameplates, but are worlds apart in character and capability. The same is true with vintage motocross bikes and their modern fuel-injected counterparts; the former often derived from period street bikes, while the latter are bespoke, CAD-CAM honed, competition dirt machines. Around my garage lurk both, including various vintage race bikes built up over recent years for events. And with several of them nearly race-ready, I decided to take a shot at the season-opening American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA) Vintage Motocross national in Buckeye, Arizona.

Vintage race cars have numerous fluid systems that require careful maintenance, namely hydraulic brakes and clutches, fuel pumps and cooling systems. Vintage bikes (generally regarded as 1974 and earlier) blissfully escape this, allowing even a

long-moldering bike to be put right with a change of gearbox and fork oil, fresh fuel and tires, carb and air-cleaner service, some spot lubrication (e.g., cables and brake cams), and fresh rubber. It's a genial day's work if nothing goes wrong and no oddball parts are required.

The bikes

Three bikes were prime candidates, including a 1971 OSSA Stiletto TT, a 250cc 2-stroke Spanish racer built in Barcelona by the projector company, Orpheo Sincronic Sociedad Anónima (OSSA). Featuring shapely but frail fiberglass bodywork and a powerful — but likewise frail — engine, it is fun to ride and had previously been rebuilt in 2011. Dunlop's latest MX33 soft-and intermediate-terrain knobby tires fit perfectly (dirt bike tire sizes haven't changed much over the decades), and after modest attention paid to other mechanicals the bike was ready. Incidentally, compared to modern bikes, machines like the OSSA provide an interesting glimpse of postwar national processes. Doubtless much machining, fabrication, assembly and details were done by hand, including the pinstriping on the lovely fiberglass bodywork. Sure, the OSSA has foibles; but it also has soul.

Next up was a 1974 Yamaha MX125; it's the proletariat dirt bike novices would buy, while the related YZ125 was the serious weapon. Although sporting different color schemes and bodywork, the two chassis were nonetheless nearly identical; the differences that count hide mostly inside the 125cc reed-valve induction 2-stroke engine. This particular bike had a YZ125 engine race-built for the 2011 season, and like the OSSA, was essentially ready to go. Its stout 1974 YZ250 fork — an allowable upgrade per AHRMA rules — had been worked over, as had the OSSA's, by Race Tech and was good to go. All it needed was air-filter servicing, some cable guides installed (the last time I raced it, a snagged cable locked the front brake, gifting me with a trip to the ambulance), and another set of grippy Dunlop MX33s. Light duty, all told. Just three years newer than the '71 OSSA, the Yamaha is a product of a different mindset — Japan was less

than 30 years past wartime annihilation and had already become a world-class manufacturing entity. The difference in design, engineering approach and quality is marked compared to the Old-World OSSA.

The contemplated third bike for the adventure, a striking red 125cc Rickman-Zündapp, was an English-built motocrosser with a German 2-stroke engine. Although it had raced most recently in the Alabama woods at Barber Motorsports Park, it's not as vociferous a racebike as the screaming Yamaha, and so it was left asleep, a redundant relic forced to await action on another day.

The prep

I truly hate the last-minute thrash that inevitably seems to come with racing weekends, and so ahead of the AHRMA season opener, I worked hard to get my work done, the bikes prepared, and training sessions (mainly pool, running and cycling) logged as best as possible. As any racer knows, race prep is always 10 pounds of stress in a 5-pound bag.

And that is why, the 2019 Chevy Silverado 4WD Crew Cab LTZ didn't get packed — in



On track aboard the OSSA (left). Unloading bikes in the pits at Arizona Cycle Park.



driving rain and wind mind you — until nearly midnight on Friday. Naturally, the garage was left behind in shambles, tool boxes were chunked inside the cab, and the bikes' seats and gas tanks were hastily protected with taped-on garbage bags. Steel rings in the Silverado's thankfully excellent anti-slip textured bed allowed easy tying down of the bikes, although the short 5-foot-10-inch bed required the tailgate to be lowered. And another thing: Despite the included bumper corner steps, the tailgate's high step-up height proved annoying; GMC's new transformable MultiPro tailgate would have been a plus. Plus, everything inside the bed needed to be tied down for safe transit. That included an ice chest, bike stand, twin 5-gallon gas cans (carrying \$168 in race gas), and a box full of oil, chain lube and cleaners. Motorcycle rule for automakers please: All pickups shall have 7-foot beds!

Racing the lashing rain-front, I met photographer Seth DeDoes in Orange County, California, and we trucked eastward through Indio and past Palm Springs, across the desert, and toward the Arizona state line, finally getting ahead of the storm.

The park

Lime Rock Park the Arizona Cycle Park is not. Situated on reclaimed land within sight of a state prison, the MX facility is nevertheless rather artfully done. Utilizing what looks like an old quarry, several tracks wind around a massive sunken area, giving a great view for those watching up on the rim. While the more recently added vintage track — an easier circuit that lacks the breathtaking jumps characterizing modern tracks — occupied a relatively flat area on the perimeter of the facility.

DeDoes and I missed registration by a half-hour, and so busied ourselves unloading the two bikes, re-taping the now shredded plastic in anticipation of forecasted evening showers, and preparing respective sleeping "quarters": Seth in a streamlined mountaineering tent in the dirt and me inside the Silverado's rear cab. As night fell and the rains advanced into Buckeye, it was hard to tell who'd made the smarter (or dumber) choice. The ripping wind, sporadic showers and the drone of a generator nearby gave Seth a fitful night's sleep. And as I painfully discovered, the Silverado rear floor is no place for camping. A central hump in the floor creates a pressure point mid-spine that simply





Making camp (top, facing page). The pre-race rider's meeting (bottom, facing page). A little stretching before the race (above). The starting gate (top right). Chasing down the leader aboard the Yamaha MX125 (right).

cannot be escaped without creating a bespoke sub-floor, which I couldn't manage with a sleeping bag, jacket or towels. Somewhere between midnight and dawn I gave up on the floor, flipped down the rear seats and somehow got a few winks there. On the positive side though, parked nose into the wind, the Silverado stayed nearly silent inside; the aero and insulation is so good that there was nearly zero evidence of the generator or wind howling outside. Impressive.

Race day

Dawn couldn't come soon enough, and at 7 a.m., race organizers turned up some sunny '60s rock, kindly lady volunteers manned, so to speak, the registration tables, and raceday began. Step one was paying an \$85 entry fee for two classes — an age-group class for the 250cc OSSA and a "Sportsman 125" class for the 125cc Yamaha. Step two was taking a copy of the sign-up form, along with both motorcycles, to tech. Typically here, the tech inspector checks the front suspension and steering for play, ensures that the throttle is self-closing, that the brakes work correctly, and that the rear shocks conform to the 4-inch travel limit. They don't pay much — if any — attention to front suspension travel.

Practice is minimal — just a few five-lap sessions assigned to different bike classes and rider groupings. Far from lengthy, it's just enough to learn the track layout, in this case a serpentine dirt course that rises and falls modestly, and darts and feigns around desert shrubs. "If you go off course, don't hit a bush," warned an official. "They'll be pulling needles out of you forever!"

As in other forms of racing, starts are crucial in motocross. In most AHRMA vintage races, 10 to 20 riders line up behind a steel gate. When the starter moves a lever inside a plywood "dog-house," all the gates drop in unison and the race is on, with riders rushing to the bottleneck of the first turn. Get a good launch out of the gate and you have a shot at escaping the pack with the leaders, but muff the start by wheelieing, spinning the rear wheel or bogging the engine and you'll spend the first lap eating



dirt-clods and dust. Either way, motocross is about as exciting as big-wave surfing or skiing off-piste; it's barely contained chaos.

The bedlam of the start doesn't exactly end after lap one, as the mechanical character of the bikes keeps giving and giving ... punishment. In other words, unlike the smooth powertrain and silent interior of the Silverado, nearly half-century-old 2-stroke motocross bikes are diametrically opposite — demons, really. Their unitized engines and transmissions are tidy enough in design, with the crankshafts turning on ball bearings, the big ends on roller bearings, the top ends on needle bearings, and the gearboxes on ball bearings and/or bushings. Ingeniously, the combustion chamber is fed its air/fuel mixture not by valves but by a set of fixed intake, transfer and exhaust ports cast into the cylinder walls; the mixture is shuttled from combustion chamber to the crankcase via transfer ports and the positive and negative pressure spikes created by the piston moving up and down, and the exhaust pipe design. As they say in dating apps: "It's complicated." VP C12 race gas mixed with Maxima Castor 927 at

32:1 lubricates the piston and main and conrod bearings via mist.

The miracle of 2-strokes is their power stroke every 360 degrees vs. 720 degrees in a 4-stroke engine. Developing frenetic power over a narrow rpm band is the signature of the vintage 2-stroke MX engine, and along with it comes frightful vibration and noise emanating through and from the thin-wall steel expansion chamber exhaust, shaped to augment cylinder charging within a specific rpm range. Typically about 32 inches wide, the handlebar ends alight with buzzing, and the entire chassis, seat and footpegs do the same. Add together the noise, vibration and commotion of racing a two-wheeler in a pack on slippery terrain, and you have yourself ample brain activation.

Good athletes make any sport look easy, and the same applies in motocross; although it may appear as though riders are just “sitting” on their bikes, this is hardly the case. Racing motocross vigorously is akin to working every machine in the gym simultaneously at maximum effort atop the greased roof of a moving bus, while dressed in 15 or 20 pounds of boots, body armor, helmet and apparel. It’s a hot and heavy, down and dirty business, in which lean muscle mass and cardio fitness is your friend.

One might wonder what sort of people race vintage



On track aboard the Yamaha MX125, grinding it out to the end.

motocross. By observation, it’s majorly Boomers imprinted during the 1970s by the excitement, machinery and popularity of the sport. Now decades later, they still find it enrapturing, recognizing that the era and activity represents a high point in their lives. Who can argue with that?

The start

Our Buckeye race day mercifully proved not rainy, but pleasantly cool and sunny.

This helped due to the heavy burden of protective gear — which just might be the most of any activity save military combat, spacewalking or hard hat diving — plus the heavy exercise that motocross requires. (For instance, in monitoring my heart rate during 5k and 10k races and riding motocross, running topped MX in maximum sustained heart rate by just 9 beats per minute or 6 percent — meaning that motocross is truly heavy-duty exertion.)

Waiting on the gate before a motocross race start is a bit more nerve-racking than starting a car race. The reason is related to fight or flight: In a rolling-start car race, I’d review my game plan for the first turn during the pace lap, but be simultaneously comforted by the steel, belts and window net cocooning me inside the car. On a motocross bike there’s no sighting lap and it’s just you, the dirt, and a bunch of spinning chains, sprockets

Two motos were all the OSSA had left, but the day was still a win.



A full bed: Two motocross bikes, fuel containers, a stand, a cooler and a ramp make for a tight fit.

and knobbies, bikes and bodies.

Motocross uses a two-moto (i.e., two-race) format. In professional AMA Motocross, each moto is 30 minutes plus two laps. In AHRMA, due to the frailty of the older bikes (and some riders!) and manifold classes, motos are typically five laps. My Buckeye weekend included two practice sessions and four motos, totaling about an hour of hard work.

Cars got “juice breaks” in the 1920s, but over 50 years later, motocross bikes were still totally mechanical devices, with no hydraulic assists whatsoever: The throttle, drum brakes and clutch are operated by cables (and many rear brakes by a steel rod). Perhaps obviously, there are likewise no electric starters, traction control, stability control or ABS. Launching out of the gate is akin to a drag-race start, requiring precise unified engagement of the multiplate wet clutch while managing engine rpm. Here and literally everywhere around the track, grip is essential. Racing is all about grip anyway, and doing it in the dirt is no exception.

The revised tire carcass, sidewall, knob design and rubber compound of the new Dunlops meant both race bikes were on as good a footing as possible — actually, on par with what pros run in certain conditions. And you can visually see the difference between one bike with older, worn knobbies fishtailing for grip down the straightaways and the experience of riding on the new MX33s. If I were to go down in Buckeye, it wasn't going to be due to old rubber. Which reminds me of a great thing about dirt riding and in particular motocross: It's a constant exercise in looking and feeling for traction, terrific mind and skill sets that translate to the street, on two and four wheels alike.

The Yamaha MX125 is hard as hell to launch. It's tall and has a short wheelbase, and the aftermarket PVL electronic ignition on its built YZ125 engine has almost no flywheel. In the first of its two motos, the motor bogged and I got a poor run to the first turn, narrowly missing a pileup of bikes and riders before making some passes to finish second in Sportsman 125. Brutally slipping the clutch in the second moto netted a cleaner start and the Yamaha pulled through for a class win.

The OSSA's two motos held more drama. It's easier to launch and I got to the first turn inside the top five both times. In the first turn of moto one, a big hit to the left rear number plate advised me that someone got in too hot behind me, leaving bear-claw shaped rubber swipe marks on the white plate. That moto likewise netted a second in class. The day's final moto — among an amazing 34 races held in Buckeye that day — proved the engine's swan song. After a good start and a diligent race, on the last lap the motor soured halfway through the lap, making ominous grinding sounds I could hear even above the din of other bikes and through the high density foam earplugs I always wear. The engine dragged more and more in the final sectors, and then expired in the last turn. Hopping off, I pulled in the clutch and pushed the bike across the line, far enough ahead of the next



rider to score a class win. (A later teardown revealed a snapped crankpin — the fault of no one except, perhaps, time, stress and some Spanish steel company in 1971.) The bike had given its all.

Regardless, two seconds and two wins resulted in two class overalls: Not a bad weekend. As well, 25 or so motocross laps at speed are plenty to tax the body. The post-races physical assessment: Worked shoulders and forearms, “monkey butt” (don't ask) and ringing ears, despite the earplugs. In my experience, karting or car racing can work the upper arms more but the lower arms, hands and legs way less.

I like to call vintage 2-stroke MX bikes the cruelest and most medieval devices money can buy. They're loud, vibrate like a paint shaker on overdrive, the 7-inch front, 4-inch rear suspension (vs. a foot at both ends on modern bikes) is at best just adequate, and the brakes lack both power and feel. Comparatively, climbing into the Silverado LTZ at day's end for the long drive back to SoCal was like an unexpected serving of smooth, tasty crème brûlée after a meal of rocks, dirt clods and sand. Although on our test unit I found the ride quality and seating less than comfortable, by comparison it was pure bliss.

And a worthy reward after a hard-fought day in the dirt. **MC**

See Test Ride, Page 80, for reviews of several products we tested during our trip.



FULL HOUSE

Ducatis in the living room

Story by Hamish Cooper
Photos by Phil Aynsley

Do you love motorcycles enough to share every waking moment with them? One man does.

From the outside it's a typical American ranch-style house: single-story, three bedrooms and a double garage in a suburb of Washington, D.C. But walk inside and any similarities to a conventional house soon end.

The floors may be polished wood

and the wall panelling complemented with sleek furniture, but that's not what catches your eye. It's the sight of nearly 30 motorcycles that have taken up residence in every room.

Where to begin

Let's start in the kitchen. Sharing space with the coffee maker,



Spares as artwork, along with an unusual set of bookends.



Motorcycles in every nook and cranny, along with period ads and gear.

refrigerator and dishwasher are a 1972 Ducati 750 GT, a 1957 Gilera 175 and a 1968 Triumph Bonneville 650.

Move along to the adjoining main room and you'll get a quick history lesson in motorcycle exotica. Two Sixties-era MV Agustas, a 125 Centomila and a 150 Rapido Sport, share space with Seventies showpieces including a Hailwood Replica, 750 Sport and 900SS from Ducati. There is also a humble little Ducati Cucciolo that makes its own statement.

Slightly farther on are two bookmarks of Ducati development. A 1985 Ducati Hailwood Mille, powered by the ulti-

mate bevel engine, goes head-to-head with a 1985 Ducati 750 F1 which has never been started. A side-room-study houses a 1962 MV Agusta 125 GTL, as beautiful as any piece of artwork.

This is all very fine but surely the master bedroom will be free from motorcycles? Nope. Here a 1950s Ducati single and 1940s Gilera Turismo are reclining on their centerstands. Bedroom two has a 1964 Ducati 250 Mach 1 tucked away discretely, and in bedroom three a 1967 Ducati Cadet and 1954 MV Agusta 175 Disco Volante share space.

So does this mean that the garage is a motorcycle-free zone? No way.



Packed in here are more Ducatis, a BSA 650 Thunderbolt Rocket, a 1972 Harley-Davidson 1,000cc Sportster and the homeowner's everyday ride, a 2006 BMW K1200R.

Way back when

"It all started back in 1970 when I was still in high school," Peter Calles says, master of all he surveys indoors. "By 1984 I had seven motorcycles, but after my divorce in 1985 the collection



increased considerably." It was a case of wife goes, motorcycles arrive, as Peter slowly filled up the house.

What was the bike that started all this? "That would be my 1968 Triumph Bonnie," Peter says. "It was my first bike

The Reno connection

Peter's relationship with Ducati tuning legend Reno Leoni started in 1980s Battle of the Twins racing and continues today with restoration of parts of his collection.

"We felt like Ducati orphans," Peter says of his early years of racing Ducatis. After Ducati importer Berliner closed in 1984, Reno, the technician it had brought over from Italy in

the 1960s, was on his own. An indication of the seriousness of Ducati's situation was brought home to Peter in April 1985.

"I went to the Ducati factory and bought a new 1985 Mike Hailwood replica," he recalls. "Mr. Valentini, the export manager who helped me, said I would be the last person to buy a Ducati directly because the factory had just been sold to the

Cagiva group. I still own the MHR. I was at the right place at the right time. Now I have 21 Ducatis in my collection."

Reno transferred his reputation for building fast and reliable Ducatis and Moto Guzzis in the 1970s into the increasingly popular Battle of the Twins/Pro Twins class of the 1980s. This had its showcase event as a support to the annual Daytona 200 race. He would become part of the Cagiva-Ducati story, going on to race early versions of the 851 Superbike with his long-term rider Jimmy Adamo. Reno's story is often lost in the telling of Eraldo Ferracci's success in World Superbike, but he played just an important part in the late 1980s.

The cigar-smoking Reno had a reputation for doing things his



Peter aboard a Ducati TT2 while racing on "Team Leoni" at Daytona in 1988.



Italian bikes dominate the collection, but in the kitchen lives Peter's catalyst and the bike that started it all, a 1968 Triumph Bonneville. It shares the space with a 1972 Ducati 750 GT.

Triumph holds its own.

"The one bike I could never sell is that '68 Triumph," Peter says. "My thinking about the whole collection is if I can't replace it, I won't sell it."

Upping the pace

Initially the collection evolved slowly, picking up pace after 1998. That was because Peter had spent the previous 10 years racing. "I became a licensed motorcycle road racer [he graduated from Novice to Expert in two seasons] and raced a factory Ducati TT2 for Reno Leoni [famous Italian-American Ducati tuner]," Peter says. "I retired from Pro Twins racing in 1998 and since then I have just collected and restored Italian motorcycles."

Those racing years, which included broken bones at a Daytona crash, also introduced Peter to the mythology of Ducati.

and we have been together 42 years. Actually my parents forbid me having a bike so my older brother bought it for me."

That Triumph, resplendent in the correct chrome, Hi-Fi Scarlet tank color

and glossy black side covers, has some opposition in the kitchen. Parked beside it is an immaculate red 1972 "round case" Ducati 750 GT. The wall behind is covered in framed posters of Italian motorcycle models. But somehow the

own way, as Peter recalls. "I remember the first time I saw Reno's toolbox I wasn't impressed," he says. "Then I learned he made most of his tools by hand. Back then that's how Italian mechanics did it, the Old World way."

Peter also remembers Reno saying in his distinctive Italian accent: "If it doesn't say 'Made in Italy' I shutta my toolbox." Being part of Team Leoni Racing, which at various times in the late 1970s had included Mike Baldwin and Freddie Spencer, means Peter has many stories to tell. One favorite is the two years Reno's team pitted beside the Ducati race team at Daytona.

The first year Cagiva-owned Ducati was racing the ultimate version of the air-cooled F1. The next year it debuted its liquid-cooled 851 Superbike prototype. The Battle of Twins was a huge focus for Ducati in those years and it brought out its star rider Marco Lucchinelli and development brains Franco Farne.

"The factory had three large containers, two for the bikes plus parts, also wine, cheese and prosciutto," Peter says. "The bikes were out of the crate ready to race, then they got down to eating and drinking. I remember Reno telling me that's how it's done in Italy."

Reno soon became the "go-to guy" for the Ducati team and the two outfits hung out together. When Peter returned from getting a birthday cake for Jimmy Adamo, Lucchinelli, Farne and Giorgio Nepoti, one of NCR's founders, joined the celebrations.

"In the garage next to us the John Surtees team was racing the Quantel Cosworth," Peter remembers. "They would borrow our rollers to start their bike. It was big and ugly and I remember Reno would refer to 'that English Moose.'"

However, the Cosworth, campaigned at Daytona for several years by several different riders, including Australians

Rob Phillis and Paul Lewis, beat Ducati's 851 Superbike in the 1988 Pro Twins race. Placing third in that year's Super Twins support race on a TT2 was a highlight of Peter's career with Team Leoni.

By now, Reno was racing Ducati's 851 Superbike with Adamo in AMA Twins events with Peter continuing on the air-cooled F1. Peter crashed heavily at Daytona in 1990, suffering several broken bones, but the real lowlight was when Adamo was killed at Daytona in 1993. It was a huge blow to the team as he had raced with Reno since the late 1970s, won the first two AMA Battle of the Twins championships and an amazing 31 AMA Twins nationals.

"I enjoyed Jimmy's company and he always took the time to help a fellow Ducati racer," Peter remembers. Now his focus is on

the motorcycle collection.

"Reno still helps me with my Italian motorcycle restorations," Peter says. "Every time I go to Italy I visit Reno, his lovely wife and his son Stephen. Reno likes it when people still remember him and all he's done for Ducati."



Famed Ducati tuner Reno Leoni.



Among the various motorcycle parts displayed around the house are a *menagerie* of mufflers, held in the display by magnets.

a huge amount of memorabilia, from models to posters to rare spare parts, leathers and helmets. "It's taken many years to collect, but I now have more than 120 custom-framed pictures throughout the house," Peter says. "There are also parts and the exhaust display is one example of my collecting. It was custom-made and the mufflers are held in the display by magnets."

Peter earned the equally impressive collection of trophies and sashes over two decades of racing Ducatis. The house looks fully furnished, but don't think that Peter has reached the limits of collecting.

"I'm always looking for the next one," he says. Peter doesn't just display the motorcycles; he also rides them from time to time. But his fascination with Ducatis remains at the forefront.

"Recently I even found an original 1940 Ducati radio in working order," he says. Could this be the finishing touch to a house of motorcycles? **MC**

"It was a privilege to race Ducatis," he says. "The handling, sound and looks are all turn-ons. When I bought my first Ducati several friends made jokes about them. Now they ask me how I got all these beautiful motor-

cycles, and my answer is I was at the right place at the right time."

Of course, devoting your life to motorcycles also makes it easier to keep in tune with the market and what's coming up for sale. This includes buying up

Highlights in Peter Calles' collection

1964 Ducati 250 Mach 1

Restored by Henry Hogben, of Ontario, Canada. The Mach 1 was an important model that many Sixties journalists compared to Britain's iconic Gold Star single. Peter also owns two other Ducati singles restored by Hogben. "A really incredible effort for someone with only one arm," Peter says.



1985 Ducati 750 F1

Peter bought this new-in-the-crate from a dealer in 1985. It has never been started. The F1 model marked a turning point for Ducati. It was the first production model to use a Verlicchi frame, a monoshock rear suspension and floating disc brakes. It was also hugely expensive.





Can you say "Revving Room?"
A suite of Ducatis stands at
attention in the living room.

1964 Ducati 50cc prototype

Berliner Motor Corp. (the U.S. importer for Ducati and Moto Guzzi) were sent this portable motorcycle for evaluation. Complete with lights and a rear carrier, it folds for ease of transport. The little Ducati was used by Reno Leoni as a pit bike for many years. Reno now lives back in Italy after decades living and breathing Ducatis in the U.S.



1972 MV Agusta 750 Sport

Simple, purposeful and drop-dead gorgeous from some angles; slightly bulbous from others. MV's 750 Sport, an inline-4-cylinder, was unique in the motorcycle world. It had drum brakes when its rivals had discs. It was a performance motorcycle that had shaft drive, not chain. Peter bought the MV in 1993, waiting five years for the bike's second owner to sell it.



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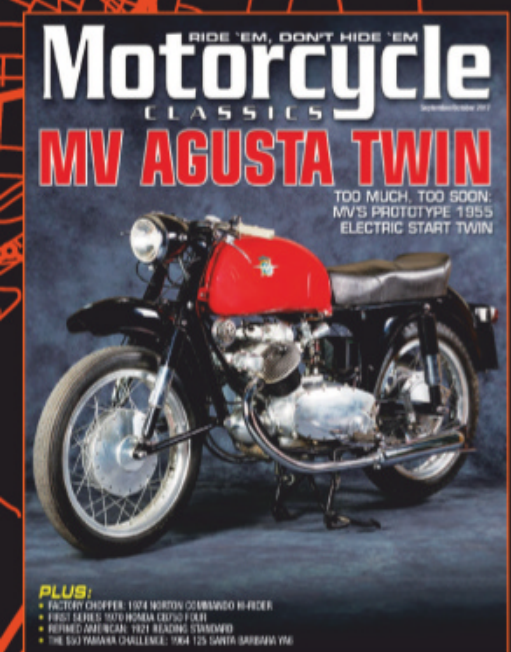
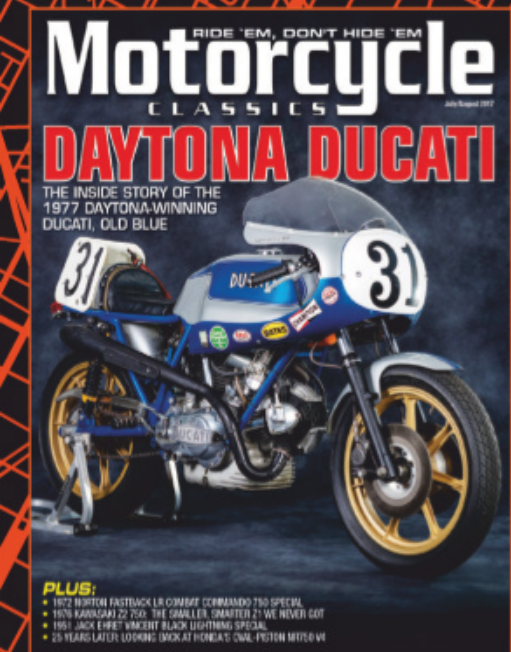


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SCAVENGER HUNT

1936 Harley-Davidson EL

Story by Greg Williams
Photos by Jeff Barger

Then there are those such as Paul Woelbing of Franklin, Wisconsin, who would choose to piece together, part by part, a rare 1936 Harley-Davidson EL, a model introduced mid-year in the Motor Company's production run, and one with more than 155 changes in the first six months of its release.

Relatively speaking, it's easy to restore a motorcycle when it's already complete.

Wheels, gas tank, saddle, engine and transmission and all of the ancillary components that make up the machine can be photographed and documented before disassembly, then cleaned, repaired, painted and plated and put back together again.

That's just too simple for some.

Others prefer to hunt for the parts and pieces to build up a complete machine, scouring deep in the bottom of dusty boxes at swap meets and constantly scanning eBay and other online sources for the last elusive shafts and gears.







1936 HARLEY-DAVIDSON EL

Engine: 60.33ci (988.56cc) air-cooled OHV 45-degree V-twin, 3-5/16in x 3-1/2in bore and stroke, 7:1 compression ratio, 40hp @ 4,800rpm

Top speed: 95mph

Carburetion: Single Linkert M5

Transmission: Constant mesh 4-speed, hand shift, chain primary and final drive

Ignition: 6v, coil and breaker points ignition

Frame/wheelbase: Dual downtube steel cradle/59.5in (1,511mm)

Suspension: Double leading link forks w/double springs front, rigid rear

Brakes: 7.25in (184mm) SLS drum front and rear

Tires: 4 x 18in front and rear

Weight (wet): 565lb (234kg)

Seat height: 32in (812.8mm)

Fuel capacity/MPG: 3.5gal (14ltr)/35-50mpg

Price then/now: \$380/\$75,000-\$150,000



Paul blames his friend Mark Jonas for that.

The pair met in the mid-1990s when Paul bought his first old motorcycle from Mark, a 1948 Indian Chief. A 1949 Harley-Davidson Panhead followed the Indian into Paul's garage, and it wasn't long before he realized he was amassing a small collection of interesting motorcycles. As part of his nascent motorcycle education, Paul and Mark made annual pilgrimages to many of the antique motorcycle swap meets, including those in Wauseon, Ohio; Davenport, Iowa; and Farmington, Minnesota.

"After I'd met him, Mark really took an interest in 1930s Harley-Davidsons," Paul explains. "And, he took a particular interest in the 1936 Knucklehead as a noteworthy machine."

The Knucklehead, so-called because the rocker covers atop the V-twin cylinders slightly resemble two knuckles on a clenched fist, was Harley-Davidson's first full-production overhead-valve V-twin engine. Prior to this, the only

overhead-valve V-twin built by the Motor Company was a specialized piece of equipment constructed for racing, and on a very limited basis. In 1926, Harley-Davidson did offer a 21-cubic-inch single-cylinder machine called the BA, better known by its nickname, the Peashooter, that was available as a flathead or with an overhead-valve layout.

For their bread-and-butter large-capacity V-twins, though, Harley-Davidson relied on sidevalve, or flathead, engine technology. By the late 1920s H-D customers riding the larger twins were demanding more power and according to well-known motor-journalist Kevin Cameron, the cast-iron sidevalve cylinders of these engines wouldn't readily accommodate the request.

"The enduring problem of the sidevalve engine is that its very hot-running exhaust valve seat and exhaust port must be cast as part of the cylinder casting itself," Cameron wrote





in an online *Cycle World* column about the advent of the Knucklehead engine. “The more power such engines made, the hotter these parts became, distorting the cylinder out of round and making oil control and combustion gas sealing difficult.”

In order to offer the sporting rider a faster mount, in 1931 Harley-Davidson engineers were tasked with developing an overhead-valve V-twin engine that could be put into regular production. The rockers would be operated by pushrods, and the two valves — one intake, one exhaust per cylinder — situated in a cast-iron head with plenty of fins to better channel cooling air over the hottest areas.

Further adding to the design brief, overhead valves required a recirculating oil system, with a pump and separate tank, to ensure sufficient lubrication would reach the valve gear. For comparison, traditional sidevalve engines were most often lubricated by total-loss systems. On the older Harley-Davidson sidevalve engines, for example, oil was gravity-fed from the tank (part of one side of the gas tank, where it was separated by a double-skinned steel wall) to a pump on the cam cover. From there, oil was distributed throughout the engine and was not pumped back to the tank. Instead, the oil would eventually leak past piston rings to burn in the combustion process or otherwise seep out between castings — total-loss.

Bad news

Worldwide economic difficulties of the Depression, however, were taking their toll on Harley-Davidson — from sales of 22,350 motorcycles in 1928 to 3,703 in 1933. Regardless, the Motor Company carried on funding development of the new overhead-valve engine with dry-sump lubrication. For this new recirculating system, a double gear oil pump found a home at the rear of the aluminum crankcase and from a separate tank, fed lubricant under pressure to the critical

internal components, including the overhead valve train. Meanwhile, the scavenge side of the pump returned hot oil from the crankcase back to the tank, where the process would simply start over.

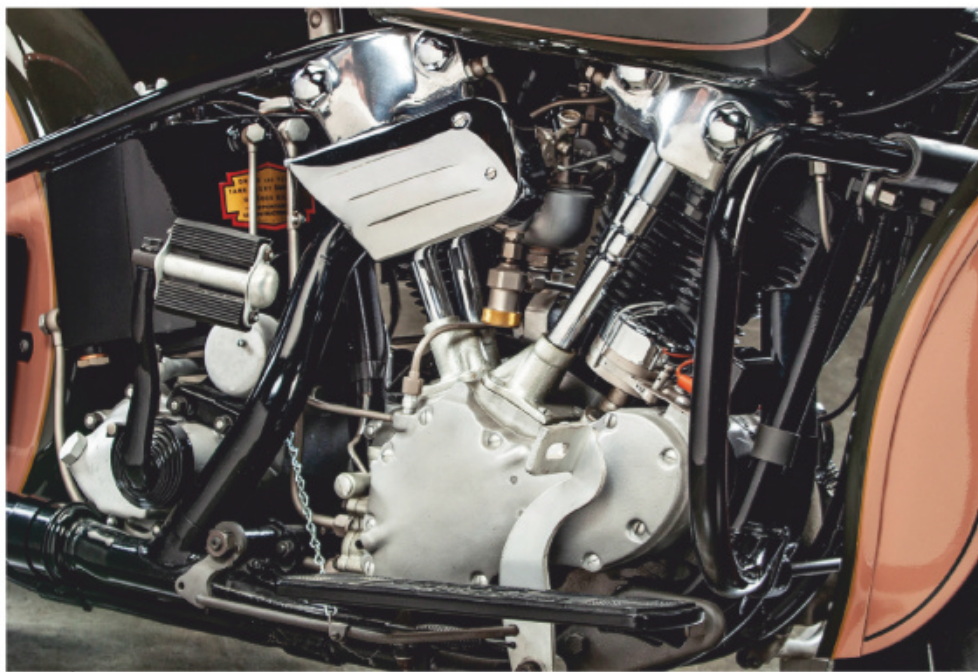
As first designed and tested late in 1933 and through 1934 and '35, the new overhead-valve engine did not feature return oil lines from the rockerboxes. Plus, the 'boxes were open, without a sealed cover, so that oil would leak out copiously. Harley-Davidson tried to better meter the flow of oil to the valve train, without success. But that didn't stop Harley-Davidson from debuting the overhead-valve machine at a dealer meeting in late November 1935 at the Schroeder Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

“I’ve seen a photograph of [the launch meeting], and that overhead-valve motorcycle is not the highlight in the room.”

“I think Harley-Davidson was fairly nervous about the launch,” Paul explains. “I’ve seen a photograph of that meeting, and that overhead-valve motorcycle is not the highlight in the room.”

By the time Harley-Davidson officially launched the overhead-valve model in 1936, the oil issue had been somewhat, but not completely, rectified. Two small caps on each rocker cover now protected the valve stems. Kevin Cameron notes, though, “Much of the reason for this chronic leakage was the complex shape of the surfaces to be sealed, which were over-ambitious. When heads heat up and cool down, gaskets are subjected to expansion and contraction of the parts they seal, and this remains a difficult problem to this day.”

The machine was available as the lower 6:1 compression ratio model E, good for approximately 37 horsepower, and the sportier 7:1 compression model EL that made 40 horsepower, both at 4,800rpm. Bore and stroke of the 61-cubic-inch engine was 3-5/16-inches by 3-1/2-inches, and the cast-iron cylinders were each secured to the crankcases via four bolts. The crankshaft rotated on roller main bearings and the two 8.125-inch-diameter cast-iron flywheels sandwiched fork-and-blade



In its first year of production, Harley's "release-and-develop" method yielded more than 150 changes to the Knucklehead.

connecting rods that turned on caged 1/4-inch roller bearings on a 1.125-inch steel crankpin. A four-lobe cam, located on the right side of the engine, operated four separate pushrods to motivate the rockers and overhead valves.

Power pulses were transferred to a new 4-speed constant-mesh transmission through a redesigned multi-plate clutch, while a new single-butt double downtube frame and a twin-leg springer fork constructed of smooth, extruded tubing were also introduced. Overall, the new motorcycle — with fluids — weighed in at 565 pounds.

While beautifully and dramatically styled in the Art-Deco sensibility of the era and strong-running, the freshly released overhead-valve Harley-Davidsons were far from perfect. This was a design process Paul refers to as, clearly tongue-in-cheek, "release and develop."

Noted Knucklehead restorer Matt Olsen of Carl's Cycle Supply in Aberdeen, South Dakota, says Harley-Davidson produced just over 1,700 examples of the E and EL in 1936. As Paul alluded to earlier, there were many revisions made to bring the machine up to a satisfactory standard during the first year of its production run. On-the-fly changes include the fitting of three different types of timing covers and two kickstarter gearing ratios while the ignition timing was also altered. Oil tanks and lines were changed seven times, there were modifications to valve springs, rocker oil feed and improved rockers themselves, and five different frame alterations.

Over the next few years, Harley-Davidson dialed in the overhead-valve motorcycle and while sales numbers weren't particularly strong, it eventually became a popular-selling model for the company. In 1941, engine capacity was increased to 74 cubic inches to create the FL, and after the war, sales figures of the larger model surged. The last year of the Knucklehead was 1947, as Harley-Davidson released a new, aluminum-head model that fall.

When that machine was released, V-twin enthusiasts dubbed it the "Panhead" thanks to what looked like upside-down cake pan rocker covers. After that, the earlier overhead-valve model was nicknamed the Knucklehead — and the names stuck.

Build beginnings

It wasn't too difficult for Paul to become interested in Mark's passion for the early Knucklehead models, and when the pair located a 1936 EL frame and engine, Paul bought the parts as the basis for a complete build. This happened in 1998, back when eBay was just emerging. A few components were purchased through the online auction site, but several important pieces were sourced from the late Clete Borchert of Old Dude Vintage Parts & Service. The shop, located in Lilburn, Georgia, is now owned and operated by Clete's son, Bart.

"The way you restore one of these early Knuckleheads is by the serial number of the engine, as that will indicate early, mid or late production through 1936," Paul explains. "The engine number on what I had fell into a mid-production period, and you do your best to guess what changes occurred and when."

Harley-Davidson did not stamp date codes on their cast components until late in 1938, and frame serial numbers were not marked until 1970. That means Paul and Mark played the role of detectives and searched for four years to locate all factory-correct parts based, for the most part, on visual clues.

They were lucky to find a transmission that would have been originally built midway through the first year of production. And for 1936 and 1937, both front and rear fenders featured a butterfly clip to retain the mounting braces, and a set was found at a swap meet.

The engine and transmission were rebuilt by the late Ken Presson of The Motor Company in Davenport, Iowa,



Owner Paul Woelbing with his 1936 Knucklehead.

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“Kenny eventually bought out tons of new-old-stock components at a time when nobody was putting much value on the old parts.”

using all original parts. “Kenny died in 2011,” Paul says. “But back in the 1970s, he got to be friends with a guy who’d had a Harley dealership in the 1930s and Kenny eventually bought out tons of new-old-stock components at a time when nobody was putting much value on the old parts.”

Throughout the restoration, it was Mark’s academic approach that appealed to Paul. Whenever possible, Mark would find an original Knucklehead and do only what was necessary to make it run. But, if a bike was too far gone, he’d restore it, correctly, right down to the last detail.

“Mark really studied the bikes, and in an obsessive way,” Paul says. “For example, Mark would look and see runs in the factory-applied paint indicating that these parts were dip painted, so he’d replicate the painting process, leaving the runs. He also made canvas covers to keep the white rubber of the grips clean, just like Harley did.”

For 1936, the EL could be bought in two-tone paint jobs including Sherwood Green with Silver, Teak Red with Black, Dusk Gray with Royal Buff, Venetian Blue with Croydon

Cream, and Nile Green with Maroon. It was the last combination that Paul originally wanted to use, but finally decided to finish it in the Dusk Gray and Royal Buff colors. After an original seat pan was restored, it was covered in fresh leather by Howard Heilman.

With the Knucklehead finished in 2003, the bike has since been sitting in Paul’s office. He has several other classic machines that see regular use, however, he’s decided 2021 will be the year the ’36 EL finally sees the road. “Because it’s not really ever been broken in, and because it’s been sitting, I think it needs a good recommissioning,” Paul says of the motorcycle. To that end, Matt Olsen, who specializes not only in Knuckleheads but also Panheads with his dad, Carl, at Carl’s Cycle Supply, is planning on picking the bike up later in 2019.

That’ll give everyone enough time to ensure that this Knucklehead — built the hard way, finding piece after piece at swap meets like some kind of mechanical scavenger hunt — is ready to roll for its 85th birthday. **MC**



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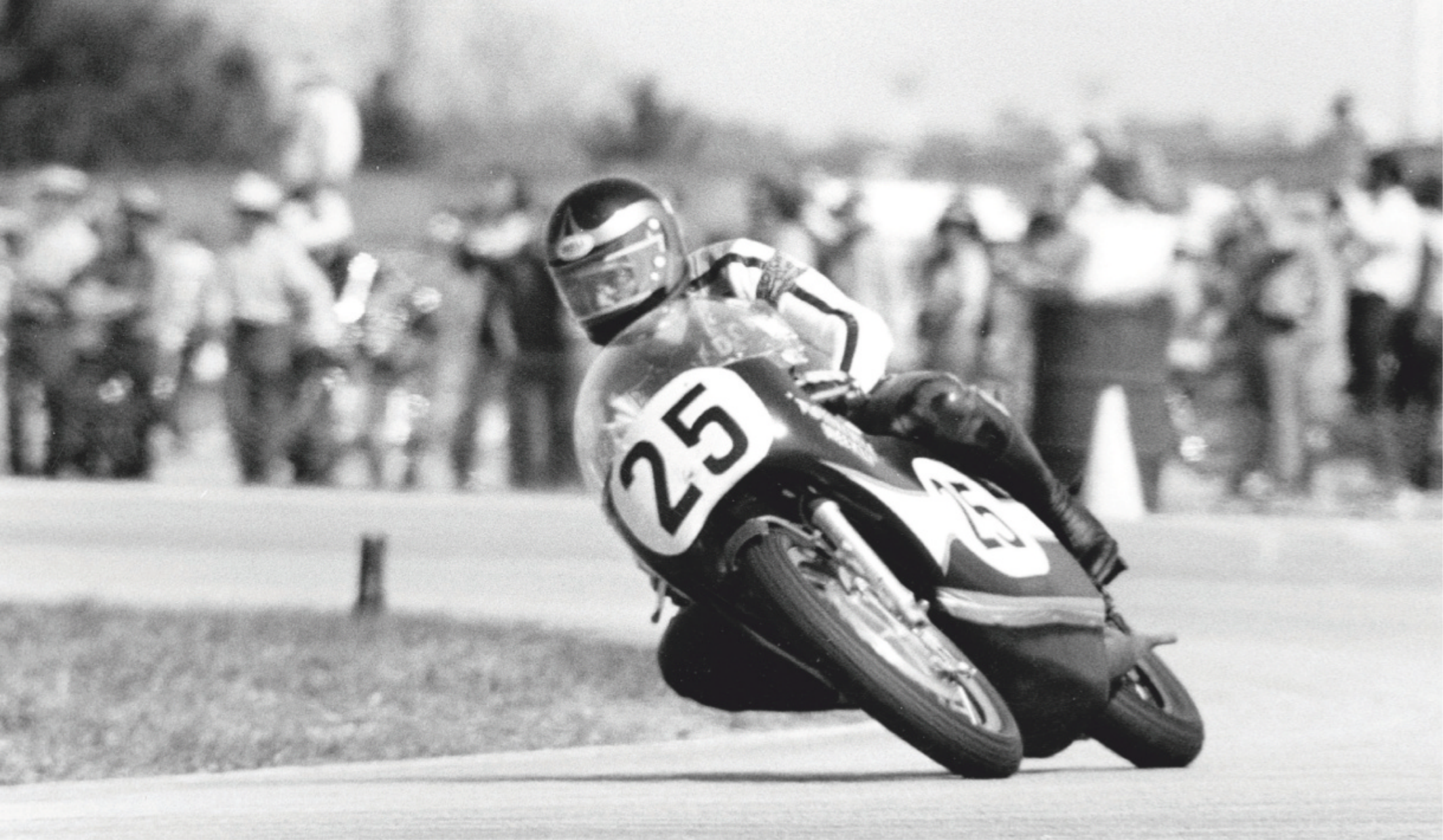


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It took Don Emde more than 200 miles of racing to win Daytona in 1972

By Dain Gingerelli
Photos courtesy Don Emde Collection

If you're seeking balance in the universe, consider Don Emde's 1972 Daytona 200 win.

His ride aboard a privately entered Yamaha TR3 is considered a major upset in Daytona history. Facing an army of factory-prepped 750cc bikes capable of speeds in excess of 170mph on Daytona's steep banking, Emde's little Yamaha 350 was good for about 160. And that speed split proved the difference between victory and defeat — in favor of Emde.

The events that led to Emde winning that race easily could be turned into a Hollywood screenplay, the opening scene taking place at Ontario Motor Speedway's garages after the final 1971 race. The camera zooms in on Danny Macias, coordinator for the Triumph/BSA factory race team, as he confidently talks to his young brood of riders, Emde among them, about 1972 plans. In so many words he says to his troops, "See ya next year." Optimism is shared among the eager team riders as they pack their gear.

Cut to Emde's driveway the day after Thanksgiving, 1971. Emde and some high-spirited buddies are loading their dirt bikes for a friendly foray to the desert. Suddenly appears the



Facing rather steep odds and a damaged shoulder, that's Emde, No. 25, just after the start of Daytona 200, in about 10th place.

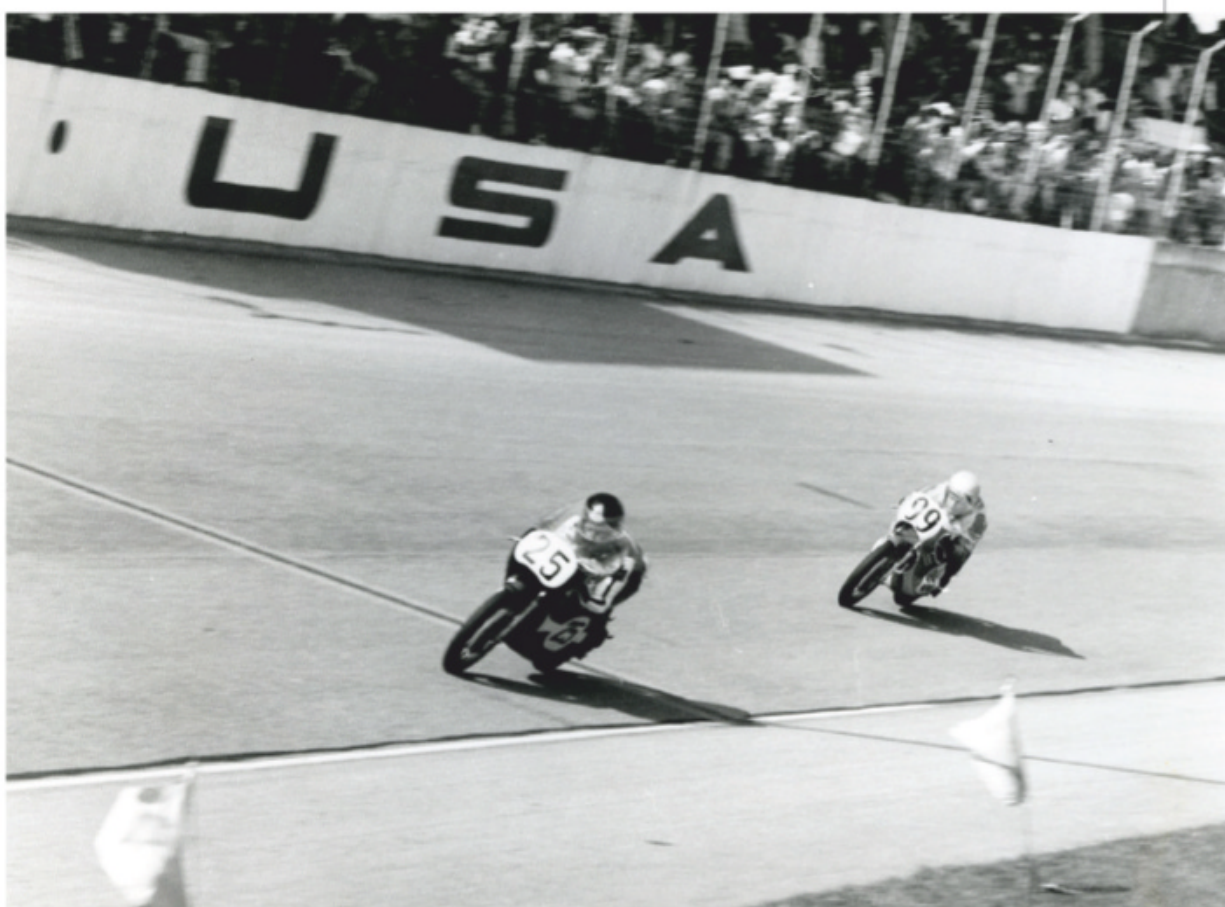
mailman making his daily delivery to the Emde house. The mail he delivers includes *The Letter*, penned by Pete Coleman, main man at Triumph/BSA's U.S. distributorship. As Emde relates today, Coleman's letter "began by stating how pleased the factory was with the 1971 season, but then he eventually got to the 'but all good things come to an end' part." Coleman informed team riders, with exception of Dick Mann (BSA and AMA No. 1 for 1972) and Gene Romero (Triumph and second in 1971 points), that their race contracts were cancelled for '72. Cue somber music while the scene fades.

Emde, only 20 years old at the time, scrambled to find a ride for 1972. He learned soon enough that all other factory-sponsored seats had been taken. What to do? He kept dialing and eventually his quest leads to Bakersfield, California, home of privateer tuner Mel Dinesen, the man Emde rode for in 1969 when he won the prestigious AFM (American Federation of Motorcyclists) No. 1 plate. Mel has a brand-new TR3 with a 6-speed transmission that's slated for Junior-class racer Jim Evans to ride. Dinesen weighs the options and decides to enter Evans in the Junior race on the older 5-speed bike, leaving the new 6-pack model for Expert-rated Emde in the 200-miler. Both riders have sponsorship from *Motorcycle Weekly*, a racing news journal of the era. Our movie's soundtrack carries the forceful, victorious beat you'd expect in a Bradley Cooper flick. Something in the universe has aligned for Emde.

Mel also has competitive Yamaha 250s for both riders to enter Daytona's Lightweight support race. Ironically, and in Hollywood fashion, the 250 bike nearly proves to be

Emde's undoing in terms of not winning the 200; he crashes during Saturday's 100-mile Lightweight race, severely injuring his right shoulder. The track M.D. tells Emde to rest for 48 hours; the 200-miler starts in less than 24 hours. Scene fades, and with it, Emde's hopes of winning America's premier road race.

But our movie's protagonist won't give up; deep in his heart he believes he's destined to win the race. "I just had it in my head that I was going to win the race, that's all there was to it," Emde says nearly 50 years later.



Emde was convinced he would win the race, and overtook Hempstead (No. 99).



Don Emde with his father Floyd Emde, (left). Don after the race with his family, which includes Floyd, who won in 1948.

But you can't win unless you actually compete in the race: "I convinced the doctor and the AMA to allow me to race [on Sunday], which they did," recalls Emde. Scene fades while Emde soaks his battered body in the motel room's hot bath the night before the 200.

There had been another obstacle in Emde's path to victory, too. After arriving at the track earlier in the week, Emde learned that he lost his support from Dunlop Tires, which sponsored him during his two-year tenure with BSA. Every tire used during 1972 Speed Week cost him and Mel money. Meanwhile, the angry 750 triples shredded their tires at a vociferous rate. All week Emde watches in amazement as those powerful 750s complete only a few laps at a time before pitting for new rubber during practice sessions. Emde formulates a plan that he takes to the Dunlop Tires garage where he meets with the man in charge.

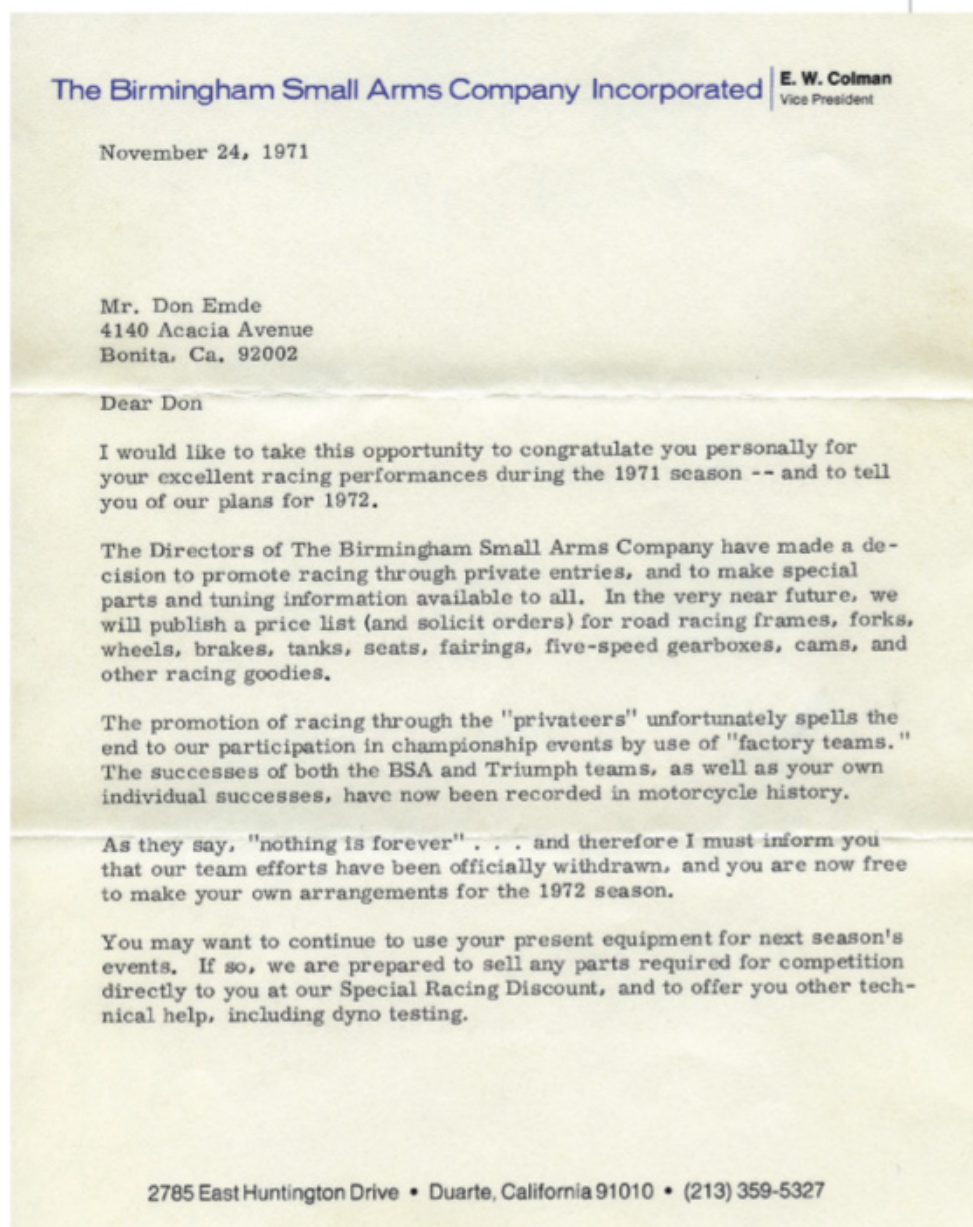
"Paul Butler from Dunlop said he could only give the factory teams support," Emde reflects today. So Emde proposes a friendly wager; if he wins the 200, then Dunlop gives him and Mel tire support for the duration of the season. Fair enough, considers Butler who, like practically everybody else in Daytona's paddock, doesn't consider Emde's little Yamaha a match for those huffing and puffing (and tire-snuffing) 750s from Japan's other brands (read: Suzuki and Kawasaki).

Emde doesn't share that same sentiment, and after a couple laps into the race he's cruising securely in about 10th place, hanging with two other Yamaha 350 riders, Kenny Roberts and Ron Pierce. Then yet another obstacle for Emde — his bike begins slowing down, the result of a piston seizure. But speed once again works in his favor: Racing flat out on Daytona's banking means that Emde's little twin-cylinder engine is pumping out extremely high rpm, and that's what ultimately saves the engine from destruction; momentum prevents the piston from sticking. Today, as Emde recalls that moment of discovery, he'll say: "If I pulled into the pits to see what the problem was I realized that I had no chance of winning the race — and I knew that I was supposed to win that race. So I said, 'what the heck,' and let out the clutch, and to my amazement the engine fired right up and ran smoothly the rest of the race."

There's also this: All those zoom-fast 750s either dropped

out or slowed due to mechanical problems, leaving Geoff Perry and his Suzuki 500 twin in the lead. Or so people thought at the time.

Again, a plot twist. Although scorekeepers reported Perry to be in first place, and even Daytona's official infield leader board broadcast Perry's No. 96 bike to be leading, he was actually a lap down from race leaders Ray Hempstead and



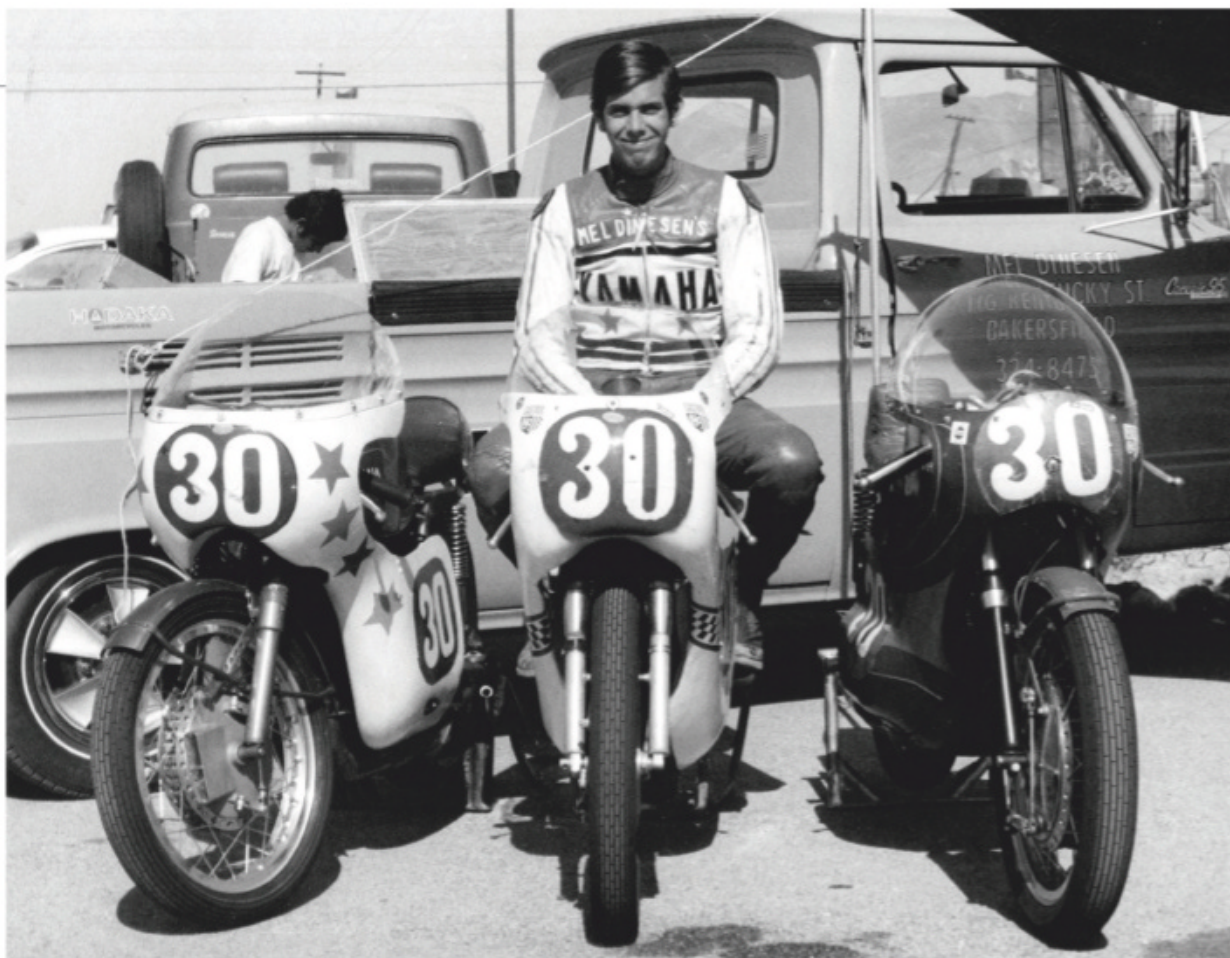
The letter indicating Emde's drop from the 1972 team.

This photo of Don Emde is from his 1969 AFM championship season riding bikes tuned by Mel Dinesen of Bakersfield, California.

Don Emde, with young Dave Smith, winner of the Lightweight race the day before, close behind them.

But precisely what position Perry is in doesn't matter when, with about a lap to go, the Suzuki's chain breaks. The young New Zealander coasts his bike to a stop as Emde, Hempstead — now slowing from a cracked exhaust chamber — and Smith pass by. Emde is first to the checkered flag to win the race.

End of story, right? Well, sort of. Emde and Mel collect and split the race purse, and Butler and Dunlop follow through with free tires for the season, but the AMA initially awards Emde a \$30 bonus for leading a single lap. That lap was, of course, the race's final lap. So everyone thought, until the post-race scorekeepers discover a mistake revealing Perry had actually only put himself on the same lap with Emde, Hempstead and Smith when he made that late-race pass. The corrected score sheet credits Emde with nine more lead laps, in the process giving him an additional \$270.



A final postscript before the movie credits roll: Don Emde's Daytona 200 win made him and his father Floyd the first (and only) father and son to win America's most prestigious race. Ironically, Floyd led every lap in 1948 with his Indian Scout, but as every racer will remind you, it's not how many laps you lead in the race that matters, it's that you lead the final lap that counts. And Floyd and Don each led the final laps in their respective years. **MC**

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RIDING ROYAL ENFIELDS IN BAJA

1,300 miles aboard a Bullet and a new INT650

Story and photos by Joe Berk

I've always thought Royal Enfield singles were beautiful motorcycles, and the idea of a resurrected and modernized Enfield 650 twin was mesmerizing.

I love riding in Baja (see *MC's Destinations* from November/December 2008, November/December 2013 and July/August 2019), and with the above in mind, I contacted Royal Enfield North America with a proposal: Lend us two motorcycles and my good buddy Joe Gresh and I would take them through Baja and write about the experience. Enfield was on board in a heartbeat.



The Royal Enfield 650
INT and 500 Bullet
next to a gray whale
skeleton in Baja.



Our plan was for a seven-day, 1,300 mile trip from southern California to Tecate (170 miles), Tecate to San Quintin through the wine country (180 miles), San Quintin through the Valle de los Cirios to Guerrero Negro (264 miles), a day in Guerrero Negro to see the whales, then an easy ride home. We'd experience freeway riding in California down to the border, the magnificent Ruta del Vino through northern Baja, and a similarly awesome La Carretera Transpeninsular (Baja's winding Transpeninsular Highway) all the way down to Guerrero Negro (our turnaround point 500 miles south of the border, where we'd visit with the whales).

The two Royal Enfields were impressive, each in their own way. We weren't able to give the Bullet a fair shake (more on that in a bit), but I still liked it. The new 650 Interceptor is a perfect motorcycle (more on that in a bit, too).



ROYAL ENFIELD INT650

Engine: 648cc air/oil-cooled SOHC parallel twin, 78mm x 67.8mm bore and stroke, 9.5:1 compression ratio, 47hp @ 7,250rpm (at crankshaft)

Top speed: 115mph (est.)

Fueling: Bosch multipoint sequential fuel injection

Transmission: 6-speed, chain final drive

Electrics: 12v, digital electronic ignition

Frame/wheelbase: Dual downtube steel cradle frame/55.1in (1,400mm)

Suspension: 41mm Gabriel telescopic fork front, twin Gabriel gas-charged piggyback shocks w/5-stage adjustable preload rear

Brakes: Single 12.6in (320mm) disc front, single 9.4in (240mm) disc rear

Tires: 100/90 x 18in front, 130/70 x 18in rear

Weight (dry): 444.4lb (202kg)

Seat height: 31.7in (804mm)

Fuel capacity: 3.6gal (13.7ltr)

Price: Starting at \$5,799



The new 650 air-and-oil-cooled engine is a thing of great beauty.

The Bullet

The 500cc single-cylinder Bullet is straight from the 1950s (albeit with electric starting and fuel injection). Jet black with hand pinstriping and a tall, exquisitely finned and polished single, the Bullet is stunning. There's no take-the-fairings-off-and-I-look-like-a-washing-machine nonsense here. This is a motorcycle where the

motor is the focal point. You know it when you see it and you feel it when you start it. It's not fast, but it's fast enough, and the riding experience is uniquely soothing. The Bullet has a speedometer and an odometer, but no trip meter and no tachometer (you can almost calculate rpm by counting



Joe Gresh riding the Royal Enfield INT650 on Federal Highway 1 (above left). The Bullet, packed and loaded with gear on the Ruta del Vino (above right).



Refueling at an impromptu Catavina petrol station (above left), and checking the Bullet's spark plug (above right).

thumps and using a wristwatch). There's a fuel warning light but no fuel gauge. There's a check engine light (which is kind of funny, because this motorcycle is all motor ... yep, the engine's there), a turn signal indicator, a high beam indicator, and a neutral light (all of which are nearly impossible to see in daylight). Cruising between 55 and 65mph (the Enfield's sweet spot), the speedo needle obscures the odometer, rendering it useless as a fuel gauge. The ignition key switch has two positions (on and off, labeled "IGNITION" just in case you don't get it).

The Bullet's fenders are enormous, deeply valanced and steel. The frame is a massive tubular affair, with portions so ample my bungee hooks wouldn't fit. Triangular black locking cases add to the vintage feel, the left one holding the fuse box and tools, the right providing access to the air filter. The Bullet comes with a decent tool kit (that's the good news), which we actually had to use several times in Baja (that's the bad news). Another keyed metal cover protects the huge battery but allows access to the terminals. The front brake is a disc. The rear brake on the 2016 model I rode was a drum brake, which was adequate but not great. The newer Enfield 500s have ABS and disc brakes front and rear.

Enfield specs the Bullet's fuel tank at 3.5 gallons. On the

long stretch from Catavina to the Pemex station 20 miles north of Guerrero Negro (exactly 110 miles, with nothing but magnificent scenery along the way) the low fuel light indicator started to flicker 100 yards shy of the gas station. Gresh saw 75mpg riding down to the border, and I got 72mpg riding the Bullet home. I don't know how many miles are left when the fuel light flickers, but I suspect that like most bikes, the low fuel light suffers from premature illumination.

The Bullet was surprisingly comfortable, more so than the Interceptor and most other motorcycles. The seat was hard and the step in it prevented moving around during long hours in the saddle, but the ergonomics worked for me.

Our Bullet was a 3-year-old press bike (a 2016 model) that had been brutally abused and neglected. It had a persistent miss, it was a quart low on oil, the chain was rusty, the spark plug lead was corroded, the kickstand interlock intermittently actuated and the battery was on life support. We topped off the oil and lubed the chain before we left; the other problems emerged deep in Baja. In the Bullet's defense, it was easy to revive after each breakdown. Some say the adventure doesn't start until something goes wrong; by that measure, the Bullet was every inch an adventure bike. Having said that, I still liked the Bullet. It had character and

Mexico's Transpeninsular Highway runs all the way down to Cabo San Lucas.





Front row parking: Stopping for dinner in Guerrero Negro's Santo Remedio restaurante.

it got us down to Guerrero Negro and back. Royal Enfield knows they erred by giving us a decrepit Bullet, but it wasn't their fault. In my opinion responsibility falls squarely on the dealer (one that is not Royal Enfield North America's usual press fleet manager). Enfield still took responsibility, but the dealer simply didn't do as RENA directed. That's good to know about Royal Enfield, and good to know about that particular dealer.

The INT650

On to the new INT650, which I still call the Interceptor (I'll explain in a moment). Enfield brought only a few of these bikes to the U.S. for certification, and we rode one on our Baja expedition. We are the only journalists to have taken it on an adventure ride of this nature. The bottom line first: The Interceptor is a quantum leap forward, taking Royal Enfield from the 1950s to the 21st century. I want one. It's that good.

Imagine a British twin (except it's not British) with a SOHC 4-valve 650cc engine, counter-balancing, electronic ignition, air-and-oil cooling, electric starting and the appearance of a 1960s OHV Enfield. Add nicely curved chrome headers with finned clamps (like they used to have), big chrome megaphone mufflers, no goofy crossover pipes, and an exhaust note that is just perfect. Include beautiful polished cases suggesting non-unit construction. The Enfield guys got it right, but they

didn't stop there. They included a slick 6-speed gearbox, ABS disc brakes, and a fit and finish dramatically more refined than anything we had in the 1960s. There's a classic teardrop 3.6-gallon fuel tank, wire wheels, a big chrome headlight, and a tach and speedo that almost say "Smiths." Get all that straight in your mind, and you pretty much have the new Royal Enfield Interceptor (except it's manufactured in India, not England). The styling is perfect. In my opinion, Enfield has out-Triumphed Triumph in being more faithful to the original layout, displacement and feel of a classic British vertical twin motorcycle.

From an instrumentation perspective, the Interceptor has all the good stuff I need and none of the stuff I don't. The bike has a digital, bar-based fuel gauge in the left instrument can, an analog speedo and tach, high beam and turn signal indicators, an ABS light, and an odometer and two trip meters. I could see it all, even in bright sunlight.



Fresh seafood is readily available and inexpensive throughout Baja. We enjoy it every time we visit.

My father rode a 1966 Triumph Bonneville (which I managed to sneak out on more than a few occasions when I was a teenager), and throughout our Baja ride, that 50-year-old memory was how I measured the new Interceptor. The Interceptor weighs 445 pounds (about 80 pounds more than the '66 Bonneville, but the '66 didn't have catalytic converters, emissions control gear, electric starting, turn signals, an oil cooler, six speeds, and ... well, you get the idea). The Enfield car-

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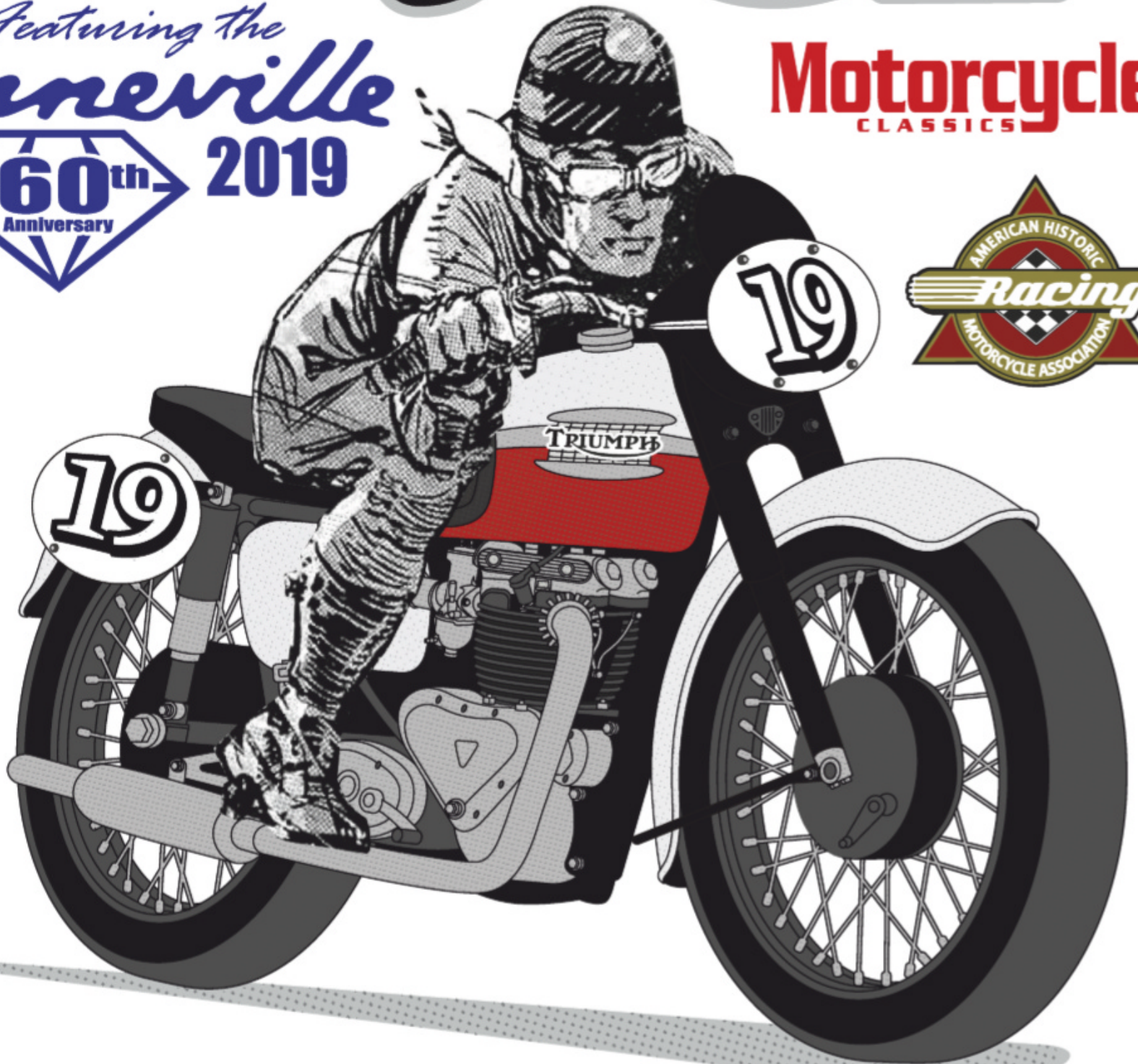


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Getting up close and personal with a baby California gray whale in Scammon's Lagoon 500 miles south of the border. The whale watching in Baja is incredible. Below: Bahia San Quintin at sunrise.



ries its weight low and it felt light and quick everywhere. The wheelbase is 55 inches, just like the '66 Bonneville. Horsepower is listed at 47 (the '66 Bonneville was 50), but the Enfield engine felt incomparably smoother and torquier than the old Triumph. Roll on the throttle and the Interceptor simply responded (I frequently thought I was in sixth only to discover I was in a lower gear). On Baja's twisty Valle de los Cirios stretch, I didn't have to downshift. Even with all the gear we carried, the Interceptor didn't care. Loaded with all our stuff, top speed was an indicated 115mph in fifth gear and 110 mph in sixth (the Interceptor's sixth is an overdrive). With just 847 miles on the odometer, we clocked a hair over 60mpg on the first leg of our trip; on our way home (with another 1,300 miles on the bike) we realized over 70mpg. The Interceptor never used any oil.

The Interceptor has single discs front and rear with ABS (there's no deactivation switch). Gresh slammed the rear brake on a dirt road and you could see where the ABS actuated on and off in the bike's track. The rear suspension is adjustable for preload, and as delivered, the rear shocks were in their medium position. Our preproduction bike had no tool kit, so there was no spanner to make an adjustment. I managed to bottom the rear suspension a couple of times but that was no big deal and adjusting the rear preload would have prevented it. Suspension travel is what's needed on a street bike. The wheels are 18 inches front and rear. Handling was impeccable. The bike felt stable and it cornered well.

I guess I need to find something to criticize, but I will tell you doing so isn't easy. The left side of the bike is crowded around the foot peg and the gearshift is too short and low (I guess it could be adjusted up). On the plus side, shifting

was slick and effortless, there was no clunking, and the bike almost changed gears telepathically (it was that smooth). The tank emblems are gorgeous, although there was a very slight curvature mismatch where the leading edge of the emblem met the tank. While I'm on the fuel tank, its 3.6 gallons and the bike's 70mpg fuel economy promise a range somewhere north of 200 miles. The bike ran equally well on regular or premium; we mostly used regular because that's what was available deep in Baja.

I like the Interceptor name, but the bike will be known as the INT650. I'm guessing that's because a certain other motorcycle uses that name (that bike is usually red). That seems somehow unfair because Royal Enfield had the Interceptor name long before you met those nicest of people on a — well, you know.

The Interceptor's \$5,799 MSRP is a new motorcycle value benchmark, I believe, particularly when considered in light of the bike's features and stellar build quality (let's hope the dealers don't muck it up too much with inflated setup and freight charges). In 1966, a new Triumph Bonneville cost \$1,320. Take that 1966 price, adjust for inflation, and it becomes \$10,298 today. Buy a new Enfield 650 and you've already saved \$4,500. At least that's the case I'm going to make, and I think my wife will go for it. **MC**

Want to know more about riding in Baja? Pick up a copy of Berk's Moto Baja!, available on Amazon.com.

"The styling is perfect.
In my opinion, Enfield has
out-Triumphed Triumph ..."



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HUMBLE MOTORCYCLE BEGINNINGS

The Ducati 60

Story and photos by Dave Ryan
Dedicated to John C. Ryan

Ducati celebrated its 90th anniversary as a company in 2016, releasing a commemorative book and updating its museum. An arguably more important milestone (at least to readers of this magazine) happens in July 2019 — the 70th anniversary of the first complete motorcycle to roll out of the Borgo Panigale factory: the Ducati 60.

An abridged version of the genesis of these bikes follows — thanks to the works of Ian Falloon and information from Bruno Ducati written in a forward to *Ducati: 50 Golden Years* by Luigi Bianchi and Marco Masetti. More resources came from the book *Il Cucciolo, un Gigante* by Giuliano Musi, photos of a “CCC” owned by Alan Moseley, and Ducati’s historical information (a large part of which seems to have been deleted from its website). I must also mention the Ducati Pushrod Singles group and the wealth of information available from its various sources. A couple of members stand out for the help they provided to me: the aforementioned Alan Moseley, and John Henry. Their vast knowledge (and thirst to add to it) were valuable assets in my journey for understanding this history.

Founding Ducati

When founded by Antonio Cavalieri Ducati and his three sons (Bruno, Marcelo and Adriano) in 1926 as Società Radio Brevetti Ducati, the focus was on the then-growing radio industry. Their first product was a capacitor; and over the years they expanded into complete radios, one of the first electric razors, a very early intercom system, and a leading edge small camera. Ducati prospered and grew during this period, built a large factory in the Bologna area and changed its name to Società Scientifica Radio Brevetti Ducati. World War II saw Ducati become a supplier of electronic equipment to the Axis. This had the inevitable result of the factory being destroyed by Allied bombers.

As Italy emerged from the war, the need for efficient and inexpensive transportation became clear. A lawyer and engineer named Aldo Farinelli designed a 48cc 4-stroke pullrod engine that could be clipped onto a bicycle frame — produced by



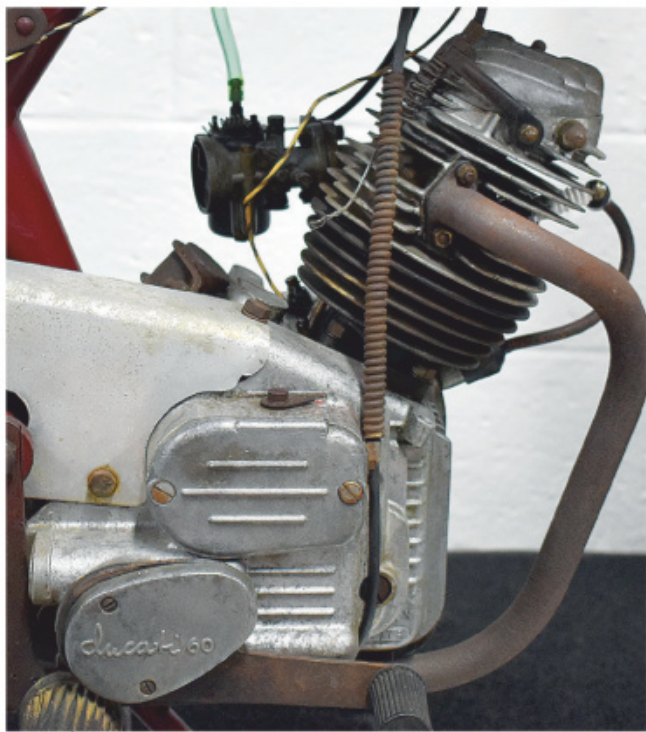
Italian automaker SIATA. SIATA, however, didn’t have the needed assembly capacity. As Ducati was rebuilding and looking to expand their reach, a deal was struck for Ducati to manufacture the engines — known as the “Cucciolo” (Italian for “puppy,” due to its distinct “bark” from the exhaust). “Cucciolo” was written in script on the exposed flywheel, and Weber carburetors were employed. Production of the clip-on engines by Ducati began in 1946 and ended in 1955 (eventually dropping the “Cucciolo” name) with total sales topping 100,000 units. Along the way, Ducati improved the basic design through five versions.



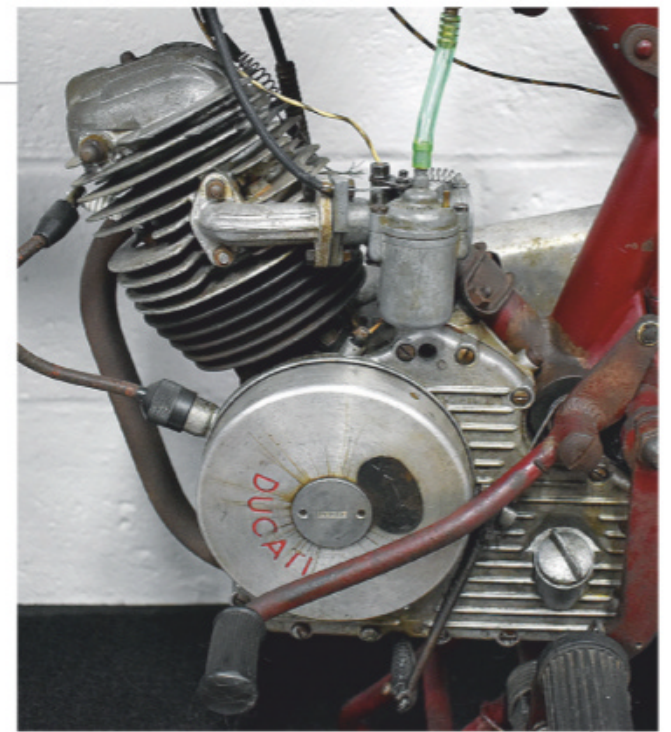
Concurrently, Gian Luigi Capellino (technical director at Shell in Genoa) put together a bicycle frame with a rear suspension under the seat to better handle the rough roads of the day in Italy. Necessity being the mother of invention, he designed this frame after moving his family away from Genoa for their safety at the beginning of World War II. His only means of visiting them was via bicycle. His frames started to gain notoriety and when Shell closed in Genoa he patented and started to sell them. Soon they were being made by Aero Caproni (the famed aircraft manufacturer and maker of the first Italian airplane).

The Capellino-designed Caproni bicycles proved quite popular matched with Ducati power, and before long the CCC (Cicli Capellino Caproni) was being made with a Cucciolo engine. The final CCCs were apparently painted green and sported a ram with wings as the tank logo and "CCC" emblazoned above it. Beyond the color, the "CCC" markings and a set of pedals, they are a dead ringer for the Ducati 60, almost akin to a prototype. (A ram was used by Caproni as the logo for its airplanes at times.)

Ducati tried to lure Capellino away from Caproni, but was



Engine: 59.57cc air-cooled 4-stroke overhead valve pullrod single, 42mm x 43mm bore and stroke, 8:1 compression ratio, 2.25hp @ 5,000rpm
Top speed: 37mph (60kph)
Carburetion: Weber 15MFC
Transmission: 3-speed foot shift, chain final drive
Frame/wheelbase: Tubular steel/45.5in (1,156mm)
Suspension: Telescopic front fork, cantilever rear suspension, friction shock
Brakes: Front and rear single drum brakes
Tires: Two Pirelli 1.75 x 22in
Weight: 98lb (45kg)
Fuel capacity/mpg: 1.3gal/164mpg
Cost then/now: 143 lire (\$4.71)/\$3,000-\$12,000



While many small displacement motorcycles of the day were 2-strokes, the Ducati 60 was a 2.25-horsepower, 4-stroke powerhouse.

unsuccessful. (They were thankfully much more successful tempting “Dr. T,” Fabio Taglioni, away from Mondial in 1954 — starting in motion what would become the Ducati we all know today. But that’s another story.) Ducati worked out an arrangement with Caproni to supply frames and began mating them with an evolution of the Cucciolo engine (punched out to 60cc) in July of 1949 — thus creating the Ducati 60, their first complete motorcycle. These retained the same Caproni “ram with wings” tank logo as the CCC, but instead topped with “DUCATI 60.”

The Ducati Museum’s display of a Caproni-framed 60 proclaims it “La Prima Motocicletta,” The First Motorcycle. The last of the Caproni-framed Ducati 60s was screwed together in May 1950, likely as Caproni decided to make their own bikes (under

the Capriolo name). This forced Ducati to design their own frame for the following version of the 60. I have yet to find anyone (including Ducati) that has production numbers on these first-ever Ducati motorcycles, but it stands to reason that they are relatively rare, as they were built for only 10 months. Ducati came under government control in 1949 and was split into two distinct concerns in 1953 — the electronics side under the Ducati Elettronica umbrella (now Ducati Energia), and motorcycles under the familiar Ducati Meccanica brand. Therefore, these pre-split bikes still carry the “SSR” logo of the initial combined company, typically cast into the engine cases.





Finding the 60

The pictured Ducati 60 came into my stewardship due to serendipity, my passion for Ducati and my interest in history (and, according to my wife, my eBay addiction). It was pure happenstance that I was looking at Ducatis on eBay in January 2016 (ahem) when I spied this Ducati 60 for sale by a collector in California. He said it was a last-minute addition to a shipping crate of motorcycles he had brought over from Italy, but he had no documentation with it at all. Incredibly original and unrestored, it was right up my alley! I subscribe to the “it’s only original once” credo, and this thing had the paint that was put on it in Bologna when it was born. I announced to my wife that I had to have it, and I wasn’t going to lose the auction. I got the usual eye-roll and yawn in response. She now affectionately (at least that’s what I tell myself) calls it “the hunk of rust.”

Initial research landed me on Phil Aynsley’s excellent website with his renowned photography. He mentions there were some differences between early (Caproni-framed) 60s and those

produced later in the run. He indicates the first group have the gas tank mounted differently, along with a different chain guard (and some foot control deviations). This was the first time I noticed these distinctions, but the few photos I’ve seen do seem to show these items grouped together. Based on his information, this bike belongs to the first series. (Interestingly, the Ducati Museum display houses a restored example from the second series which looks to be painted the wrong shade of red — not to be critical.) I took a shot in the dark and sent an email to Mr. Aynsley to see if he could help me with further research. He pointed me to an online club for owners of these early Ducatis — the Ducati Pushrod Singles group. This may sound like a fringe dating site, but it is really a great source of information (with quite a group of knowledgeable, helpful folks). The information gleaned from these sources, along with the Vintage Motor Cycle Club in the U.K. leads to the following conclusions:

The definite non-original items on the bike as it sits are the muffler, the wiring and its routing, the headlight lens and one or



Original Radaelli seat (above). Worn Caproni “ram with wings” logo on the small 1.3-gallon fuel tank, with original paint.

The details on such a basic bike are amazing. The “ducati” script on the shift lever cover mimics that on the iconic Gio Ponti-designed Ducati radio of the 1930s (RR3404).



both fork gaiters (they don't match). Missing are the tire pump (which would mount under the main frame tube) and the tool kit (consisting of a spark plug wrench and a 10/8mm open-end wrench, which would be housed in the box beneath the seat). I can't imagine that the tires are original, but they do appear to be the correct Pirellis (although the front tire should likely have ribbed tread). The rack over the rear wheel was apparently an available accessory, and is actually sprung in the tubes attached near the rear axle (a pad could be added for a rear passenger). Another accessory was a rather large fairing sort of apparatus that served as weather protection for the legs — almost scooter-like in appearance. Also, there were two versions, the standard model with black headlight ring and handlebars, and the high zoot variant with those parts in chrome. According to the seller and the VMCC, this particular example was turned loose to the world sometime in 1950.

My first communication with noted motorcycle author and historian Ian Falloon was while investigating a purported “Marianna” racer for sale (Mr. Falloon confirmed it to be a replica). Who better to go to with such questions? His authentication reports are gold for collectors. I brought up my 60 and my thoughts regarding the story of the beginning of Ducati motorcycle manufacture. He was gracious enough to review my ramblings and confirm their accuracy. He also agrees that there seem to be two distinct series

of these Caproni-framed Ducatis and believes this to be a very early example. Further, he feels it was born in early 1950, and says the “ML” frame number prefix shows it to be a Caproni number.

Since arriving in my garage it's been treated to an oil change, new spark plug, new fuel line and a cleaning of the chain. It does run as I confirmed after putting some ethanol-free gas in the tank and kicking a few times. I also replaced the muffler that was on it with a correct appearing reproduction (I guess everyone swaps out the original exhaust on their bikes!). That muffler and a more correct headlight lens (along with some reproduction fork gaiters) were purchased for me at the Reggio Emilia swap meet by John Henry. He also sent me a copy of an original brochure-like document and copies of two original ads. It's hard to imagine being that willing to help someone he has never met — what a guy! I have since found an original warranty certificate and an owner's manual, along with a rare, original “Ducati Servizio” porcelain sign (with the “SSR” logo). Maybe I do have an eBay addiction ... My plans for the little 60 are to merely preserve it as the interesting and historical artifact it is, and maybe exercise it a little, here and there. *Thanks to Ian Falloon for his help with this story.* **MC**



The place of honor in the garage. Mounted above the 60 is a rare, period-correct “Ducati Service” sign.

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WORLD'S BEST

An interview with George Barber

Story by Alan Cathcart

Photos by Phil Hawkins, Kel Edge & Barber Motorsports

Courteous and correct, yet clearly fired by an inner passion for doing whatever in life he chooses to accomplish to the best of his ability, George W. Barber is the man we all dream of becoming.

The 70-something Alabama businessman has made a success out of everything he's done in life: In 1970, Barber took over the family dairy business, Barber Dairies, founded by his father in the 1930s. After selling the dairy in 1998, he's since branched out into real estate and played a key role in Birmingham, Alabama's resurgence as one of the principal medical cities in the U.S. He's also driven development of the massive Barber Marina on Alabama's Gulf Shores — but best of all he's created the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum, housing what is unarguably the world's finest collection of motorcycles, set alongside its own daunting but scenic race track. Begun in a warehouse in downtown Birmingham, Barber quickly ran out of space. He purchased a property from the city outside of Birmingham, and built the current museum there.

Despite his eagerness to meet and talk with fellow bike enthusiasts who flock to see his collection, George Barber is a private person, so it's rare for him to be per-

suaded to recount in detail the story of the museum's founding. But here in his own words is how that came about.

"I've always been enthusiastic about automobiles, but I guess my earliest memories of driving are of delivering milk in a truck, which I had to do every summer when I got out of school. That was until I got old enough to begin racing cars in 1960." Aged 20, Barber wasn't just a rich kid who wanted to show off, but a seriously good driver who won 63 races in the following decade, and successive SCCA Divisional Championships with various Porsches ranging from the Super 90 road car he started with, via a Carrera, 904 and RSK, finishing with a 2-liter Brabham BT8 sports racer. Moreover, in further dismissing the rich kid label, he actually prepared the cars himself.

"I did all my own work, and was pretty expert mechanically," he states proudly. But in 1970 George's father passed away, which put an end to his racing career as he devoted himself full time to the family milk business. But it did lead to his starting up the Barber Museum: here's how.

"It all began with cars — or, strictly speaking — milk trucks!" George says. "We had a truck rebuild facility for restoring old milk trucks to new. But we were beginning to wind that down, because we had such old 1950s trucks we couldn't find the parts for them. So Dave Hooper, the man who was working there for me, suggested we should do a motorcycle or two, and in 1991 he restored a couple for me, one of which was a 1952 Victoria Bergmeister. This made me begin to



The man himself, George W. Barber.



The Barber Motorsports Museum in Birmingham, Ala.



The central elevator is large enough to move a full-size car from floor to floor. An Indy-style race car sits on top of the elevator.

see how a motorcycle is really a piece of mechanical art which wears its technology on the outside. Unlike cars, you can see the front suspension on one motorcycle and compare it to another, whereas with cars, all you can see is a beautiful paint job, and a set of hubcaps. Having always done all the work myself in preparing my own race cars, I began to fall in love with the mechanics of motorcycles, so in 1981 we started buying bikes to form the basis of a collection."

"I got up to about 100 bikes quite soon, and I was really having a lot of fun doing it, especially meeting other collectors. So I thought that with a little bit of luck, I could put together the best motorcycle collection in the world, and have it right here in Birmingham, Alabama, in a way that'd help my city, and I'd have a hell of a lot of fun doing it. So here it is — and I'm still having fun!"

"As we started assembling the collection, we needed a place to store the bikes, and to begin with I used a facility we had in downtown Birmingham. But we outgrew it pretty quickly, and needed to expand. I incorporated the museum in 1994 as a nonprofit entity, and just then we discovered the site where we are now, which was then owned by the city. But we ended up buying the property, so now I control it and I can do what I like here. It's worked perfectly for us."

The Barber Motorsports race track came about at the same time as the Museum was established. "Originally we planned just a small test track running through the woods," George says. "At first, I thought we should stop at that, and we could build it better as the need arose. But then I thought, 'Well, that's going to cost about 10 times as much, so let's do it right the first time.' So we did. We opened it in 2002 about a year before the Museum was completed. I think we've used the topography exceptionally well. It's a racer's track, with so many demanding blind apexes, and as



Part of the dirt bike display, which debuted in the new expansion, finished in 2017.



a racer myself on a humble level I had so much fun doing it, too. I'd take a picture of a corner, and I'd send it to John Surtees, Dan Gurney and Carroll Shelby too, and I'd say, 'What do you think?' and they'd come back and say, 'Well, give it a little more angle, some more camber, open it up or tighten it up, whatever.' I'm often asked, 'Who designed the track?' A lot of people designed the track! I had so much fun doing that with those guys."

The late John Surtees became a close friend of Barber's, did this come from designing the circuit with him?

"No, it was before that. We were looking at acquiring some MV

Agustas, and of course, you'd look no further than John Surtees for that because he won seven World Championships with them. So I called him up one day and we had a nice chat, even though I was terrified to talk to the man — me speaking to John Surtees, my gosh! Anyway, we had a wonderful discussion and I finally bought a bike from him, and then several more over the years. He'd come and visit with us here, or meet us in Daytona, and I have some wonderful memories of John. He was like a ballet dancer on a bike. When I first saw him push his bike off, and lean his butt onto it to bump-start it, then stand on the footrest and roll his leg over the seat as he accelerated away, just folded into the bike to be all of a part of it — it was magnificent. He didn't have to go more than 50 feet before you knew he was a World champion."

The Barber Museum's unique spiral layout with a central elevator is unique in the motorcycle world, and is often compared to the Guggenheim Museum in New York, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Was that George's inspiration for this design?

"No, my inspiration was a parking lot in downtown Birmingham! You drive around in a circle to go up or down, and you can peel off and go to various floors on the way. So I thought, 'Why don't I do it a little bit smaller, made for people not cars, and they can peel off and go to the various floors they want to visit.' I also love the idea of it being staggered so that when you sit here, you can look into three different floor levels, and wonder how to get there, and what awaits you. So it's not like so many other museums, where you walk in the front door



George Barber admires a photograph of the late John Surtees, who was a friend.

A group of trials motorcycles on display in the recent extension.



and you've seen everything. Another thing that's wrong with many museums is that they have the bikes just lined up in rows side by side, and you can't see them properly — they're just a bunch of dead motorcycles, set all in a line. I think we've specifically addressed that with our layout. We've also tried to group bikes from different manufacturers with a common thread, like your Bimota Tesi next to some 888 Ducati Superbikes with the same motor. The only real pollination we have is the display of Yamaha race bikes we've now got in our extension — so you can see the entire line of Yamaha racing motorcycles from day one all the way to the end. But I didn't want to have all our Harleys or Guzzis or whatever all together, because the Harley guy would go to look only at Harleys, and not see anything else. I want him to see the Ducati next to the Harley, next to the Guzzi, and so on — and to be able to compare different kinds of bikes with each other."

The Barber Museum extension opened in 2017 provided over 50 percent more display area, which allowed George to finally display the extensive collection of dirt bikes he'd been

building up in his cellars. But even with the extension, does the Barber Museum still have other bikes undisplayed?

"Yes, we probably have around 1,000 bikes on show at any one time, with another 500 in storage. But we keep adding to the collection as and when something we think we ought to have becomes available. We've still got a few bikes in mind that we'd like to buy, but I won't say what those are, because when you do the price triples!"

Visitors to the Barber Museum are often astonished to find themselves talking to George Barber himself about their mutual passion. Does George visit the Museum often, given this is only a small part of his overall business?

"Yes, I love to be here," he smiles. "I'm here after work most



Alan Cathcart (left)
with George Barber
and the Vostok C364.



Inside the vault: The majority of the bikes that aren't on display wait for their turn.

days, in the late afternoon around 4 p.m. I spend as much time as I can here, and I love to meet visitors from all over the world and talk to them. You can't miss the opportunity to talk to such people. The museum has become a magnet for those who would never have come to Alabama otherwise. Europeans go to Florida, or to California, and a few of them might go to Texas and New York. But Alabama? It's amazing

to me that just in passing, they'll come and shake your hand or pat you on the back and say, 'Thank you, I enjoyed this so much.' I'm gratified they'd take the time to do so, because I've had even more fun creating it than they've had in coming!"

Coming here after work must mean that George often finds himself alone with this huge family of motorcycles. That must

Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum: World's Finest

The Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum is housed in the 880-acre Barber Motorsports Park outside Birmingham, Alabama, and contains the private collection of historic motorcycles, plus Lotus and Porsche cars. Assembled over the past 30 years by former milk baron George Barber, the museum was officially recognized in 2014 by Guinness World Records as the largest motorcycle museum in the world.

Although Barber's collection was opened to the public in 1995 at its original location in downtown Birmingham — in a building which formerly housed Barber Dairies' milk delivery trucks — the museum reopened in September 2003 in a purpose-built complex outside the city, alongside its own racetrack. This imaginatively designed structure, with a central elevator and Guggenheim-type spiral display layout, houses a growing collec-

tion of over 1,500 motorcycles — around 1,000 of which are on display at any time — representing 216 different manufacturers from 20 countries. It's claimed that 99 percent of the bikes on display (apart from those made of wood!) are able to run after less than one hour of recommissioning. After an additional 85,000 square feet of covered space was added to the original site in 2017, the Museum's display area now covers over 250,000 square feet in total, and attracts more than 300,000 visitors annually — 79,336 of them at the 2018 Barber Vintage Festival that's been taking place annually in early October since 2005. Facilities include 25,000 square feet of meeting space, a 74-seat multimedia theater, and space to accommodate 800 people seated for dinner at events such as the annual Motorcycles by Moonlight gala fundraising banquet staged each October.

The Museum sits alongside its own 16-turn, 2.38-mile, 45-foot-wide Barber Motorsports race track designed by South African Alan Wilson following George Barber's overall instructions, with input from John Surtees, Dan Gurney and Carroll Shelby. This has a spacious



An aerial view of the museum (foreground), with the race track and paddock.



be a slightly eerie, but also very rewarding feeling?

"Yes, you've exactly got it! The most fun thing about having this collection is when everybody leaves the museum, and it's early in the evening, you walk by some of these motorcycles — and I swear they talk to you. They draw you to them. Particularly some of the bikes that have been ridden by World champions. Each bike has such a fantastic history, so as you walk on by it says,

'Come here, I want to tell you something.' Here's an example — this is a Vostok four, one of two 1960s 500cc Russian Grand Prix bikes we have here. I acquired this one really early on, when we were still in the middle of the Cold War. I was talking on the phone to the guy in Moscow I was negotiating to buy it from, and I told him, 'Yes, I'd like to have the bike.' So then he said, 'Listen, we have some MiG-25 Foxbats for sale, too.' This was the

multi-level paddock, and is widely acclaimed in equaling Laguna Seca as the most demanding circuit in North America, thanks to its blind turns and clever use of the many changes in elevation totalling over 80 feet, while grip is exceptional. That's because during the 2012 off-season, the track surface was ground using a diamond grinder, which not only prolongs surface life but also adds grip — a costly process typical of George Barber's "nothing but the best" mantra. The nearby Barber Proving Grounds complex includes a multi-configurable track with classrooms overlooking it, two wet/dry skid pads, an obstacle course and a 50-acre offroad course which includes a 0.7-mile vintage motorcycle scrambles track. Two pedestrian bridges give access to the infield areas within the circuit — one 408 feet long, excluding patios, whose structural design allows up to 3,000 people on the bridge at one time.

But in creating what's been termed "The Augusta Masters of Motorsport" thanks to its manicured grounds and well-groomed pathways bearing comparison to the world's most pristine golf course 275 miles due east in neighboring Georgia, George Barber hasn't stinted



The view of the museum and one of the pedestrian bridges from the Expo Area.

on landscaping his creation. Surrounded by untouched forest and noted for its park-like setting, Barber Motorsports Park contains over 16,000 azaleas planted around its landscape, and there are 3 miles of Burford hollies behind the guardrails, as well as 17 Hightower willow oaks existing only in two other places. "Barber Motorsports is a beautiful park that just happens to have a racetrack in it!" George Barber says. "We have nine varieties of magnolias, over 6,000 dogwoods, and 167 acres of lawn to mow!" There are no permanent grandstands, but two-thirds of the circuit can be seen from the main spectator area, and there's a con-

stant tram service along the road circling the track to permit convenient changes of viewing area. The whole venue is highly family-friendly — but it's notable how well the public respond to being treated like human beings at a major sporting event. There are plentiful rest rooms, and scarcely a scrap of litter left on the ground after a crowd of tens of thousands has left the park, thanks to Barber's insistence on constantly emptying trash bins throughout the day. "I think once you start with something that's clean and well maintained, people see that and they'll respond in kind," George Barber says. Hard to argue with that. — Alan Cathcart



One of the four racks of motorcycles on the corners of the elevator shaft (left).

supersonic Russian interceptor aircraft that back then was the fastest military aircraft yet to enter service! And I thought, 'Here I am talking on a phone to this man in the middle of Moscow about buying a vintage racing motorcycle, so how in the hell can we be talking about also purchasing warplanes? It was quite an unreal experience, but every time I see the Vostok I think of that!'

Asking George Barber which of the 1,500 bikes he owns is his favorite is a bit like asking someone to name their favorite child — but still, what is it?

"No question — it would have to be the MV Agustas that John Surtees rode, because of my relationship with him, and remembering him as a dear, dear man. And these motorcycles talk to you about his accomplishments on them, big time! So I've got to say those are my favorites, because they were ridden by a man who was a World champion both on and off the track. But Giancarlo Morbidelli is also a close friend, and we have some of his motorcycles here. They talk to me also, though not quite as much as the Surtees bikes. We have a Morbidelli display that's a smaller version of what Giancarlo has in Pesaro at his own museum there. He's a fabulous man, too."

How George Barber presents the race circuit to visitors is very different from other track owners. For example, there's a tram which runs around the track to let people change

position conveniently. Did this come from going to races himself?

"Yes, indeed. Why do I need to walk a mile to get from one corner to another and watch the race from various places? I don't want a spectator grandstand where you're standing on 18 inches of concrete or steel all day — I want you to get on the tram and watch the race from this corner, then get back it again to watch from six or seven different places, not just one."

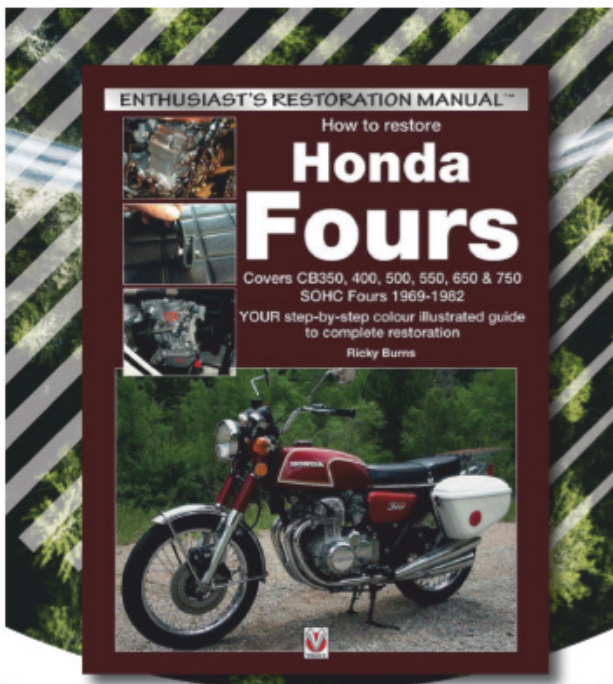
So, what will happen to the Barber Museum in the future after George is no longer with us?

"Well, it's a 501(c)(3) Foundation, so a nonprofit entity, and it's fully funded — so this thing can go on and on until people get tired of motorcycles, and don't want to come here anymore."

Finally, how does George feel about the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum over 25 years after he started collecting bikes? Is there anything that he'd have liked to have done differently in creating it?

"I'd like to have done it faster, that's all! But other than that, no. It's a dream come true — it really is. *The Guinness Book of World Records* says it's the world's best museum for motorcycles. I'm delighted to be a part of creating that." **MC**

Join MC at the 15th Annual Barber Vintage Festival, Oct. 4-6, 2019.



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HOW-TO



Two readily available thermostats for your BSA/Triumph triples: the Madigan (left) and the Tru-Cool (right).

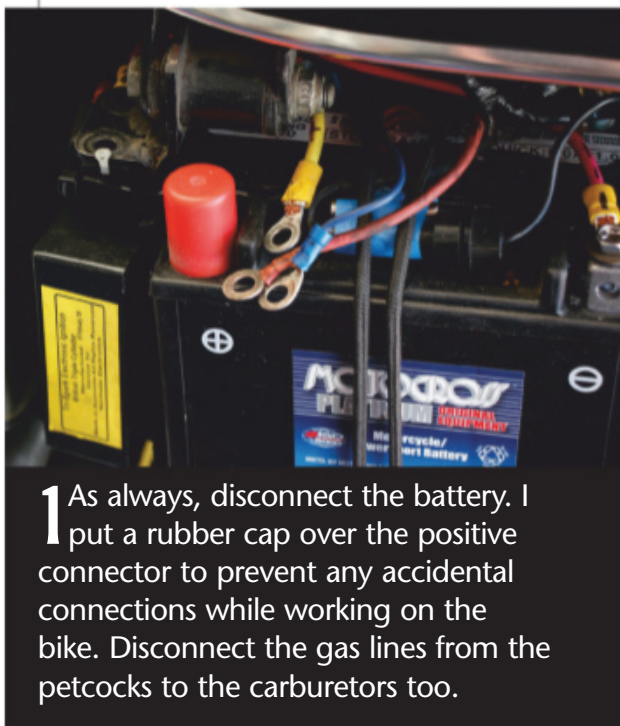
Adding an oil thermostat to your BSA/Triumph triple

The Triumph Trident and BSA Rocket III were among the first production motorcycles fitted with an oil cooler. Due to the extra cost, no thermostat was fitted. For long, fast runs, that probably never mattered. But as these bikes have become used more for pleasure than utility, shorter, slower rides are more the norm. Because of that, the oil often doesn't reach high enough temperature to boil out the condensation that occurs when the motor is warming up. It also takes longer for the motor to warm up with the oil constantly circulating through the cooler. Neither of these factors are good for the long-term life of the oil or the engine. Fortunately oil thermostats are in widespread use in the trucking industry as regulators for transmission coolers. Also, triple specialist David Madigan has designed a thermostat specifically for the

BSA/Triumph machines that incorporates a special feature, a feed pipe for the rocker boxes. We'll show you how to install either the commonly available transmission thermostat or David's specialized one in this How-To. A detailed explanation of the function of these thermostats is well beyond the scope of this article. For a good report of the function of both of these designs, refer to triplesonline.com, where you can find a report written by Richard Beard, who was present at the creation of the original cooler for the English triples. The Tru-Cool was sourced via Amazon, while the Madigan thermostat was purchased directly from David Madigan at madigan_analytical_designs@yahoo.com. The Tru-Cool was about \$47 shipped, and the Madigan was about \$80 with Priority Mail shipping paid by check. PayPal adds about \$2.50.

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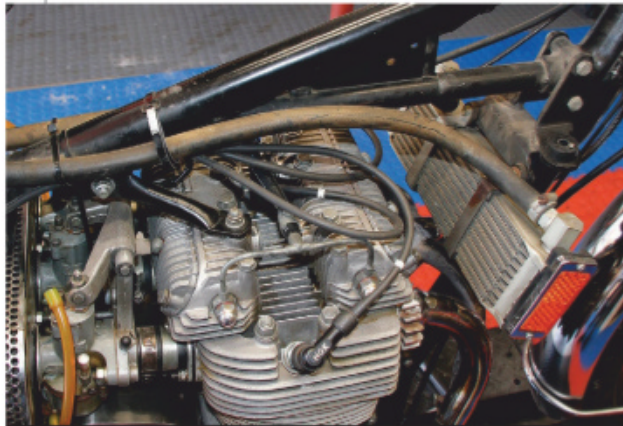
1 As always, disconnect the battery. I put a rubber cap over the positive connector to prevent any accidental connections while working on the bike. Disconnect the gas lines from the petcocks to the carburetors too.



2 We begin by removing the gas tank; the oil lines we need to access are under the tank, along the top tube. You'll need a 1/2-inch socket and ratchet to remove the bolts holding the tank in place. An extension will be useful in removing the front tank bolts to avoid interference with the oil cooler.



3 Keep track of the rubber buffers that insulate the tank from vibration and remember their placement.



4 Once the tank is off, locate the feed and return lines. Most bikes I've seen have the engine to cooler feed on the left, return on the right. Double check to be sure. It's easiest to trace the line that runs to the top of the oil tank; that's the return line.



5 The feed side of the cooler has a tee connector running a 1/4-inch-diameter hose to the valve train to feed the valve rockers. If you're using the Tru-Cool thermostat you'll need to keep this in place.



6 Disconnect the oil hoses, beginning at the cooler. Unless your bike has been sitting for a while, you will get some oil drainage from here.



7 Disconnect the oil hose at the cooler side of the tee.



8 Remove the section of hose, and remove the hose clamps for reuse.



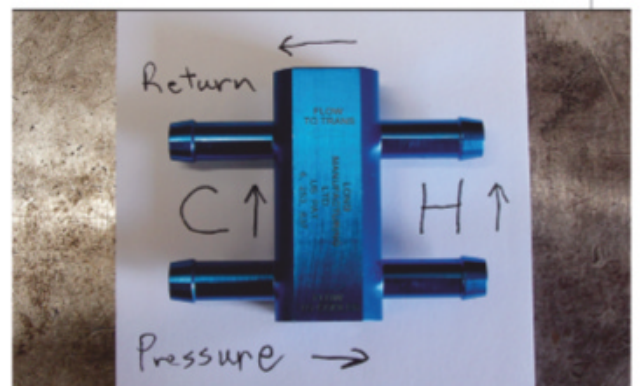
9 Loosen the clamps, beginning at the cooler. This hose won't have much if any oil in it as it drains back to the oil tank.



10 Loosen the clamp at the oil tank.



11 Disconnect the return line from the cooler and the tank. Keep the clamps for reuse.



12 This is the Tru-Cool thermostat with what I hope is a helpful diagram of the flow. C is for cool temperature, showing the oil path through the body of the thermostat bypassing the oil cooler. Once the thermostat's operating temperature is reached, the oil passes through the H for hot side and through the cooler before returning to the tank.



13 Cut a segment of 7/16-inch oil line to connect the thermostat to the rocker feed. Use the existing rocker feed for this thermostat since it doesn't have one of its own. Keep the feed on the cold side of the thermostat to avoid starving the rockers while the oil comes up to temperature. Tighten the hose clamp at the thermostat a little tighter to compensate for the smaller spigot on the thermostat. Use an existing clamp to hold the other end of the short hose to the tee.



14 Connect one end of your 7/16-inch hose to the hot side of the thermostat and gently bend it toward the inlet of the oil cooler. When you have it situated to your satisfaction, mark it and cut the hose.



15 Using an existing hose clamp and one of your purchased clamps, attach the hose from the hot side of the thermostat to the inlet of the cooler. Don't tighten the inlet clamp just yet, we'll use it to prime/fill the hot side just before we finish. The clamp at the thermostat will require extra cinching to compensate for the smaller spigot on the thermostat.



16 Attach one end of your 7/16-inch hose to the hot side of the thermostat on the return side and gently curve the hose as you did on the inlet side. When you're satisfied with the placement, mark and cut the hose.



17 Using an existing and purchased hose clamp, attach the hose to the cooler and the thermostat. Tighten both clamps. Again the clamp at the thermostat will require extra cinching to compensate for the smaller spigot on the thermostat.



18 Attach one end of your 7/16-inch hose to the return spigot on the oil tank. Use an existing clamp to cinch it in place.



19 As you did with the other lines, measure the hose length needed to reach the thermostat and mark and cut the hose. Once again, extra cinching is needed to seal the hose to the thermostat.



20 The finished installation of the Tru-Cool thermostat.



21 As we mentioned in the introduction, the Madigan thermostat is purpose-built for the Triumph/BSA triples, incorporating a dedicated tap for the rocker feed that removes the need for the tee in the feed line. In addition, the spigots are the proper size for the 7/16-inch oil lines, so you don't need to cinch the hose clamps down as hard.



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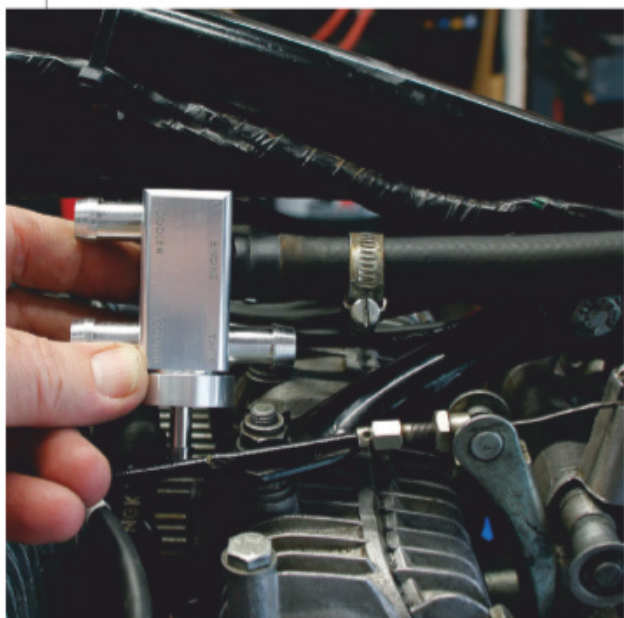
22 For the Madigan installation, follow steps 4-20, but omit step 13. Remove the tee on the feed side to the rockers.



23 Disconnect the hose at the rocker feed.



24 Remove the tee and hose and set aside.



25 Attach the feed line to the spigot marked engine, rotate it into position and tighten the hose clamp.



26 Attach one end of the 1/4-inch hose to the rocker output spigot on the thermostat and measure the length needed to reach the rocker pipe. Once you are satisfied with the length, mark and cut the hose.



27 As you did in the Tru-Cool installation, measure the hose length necessary to reach from the tank to the return side of the thermostat, and cut and clamp.



28 The same procedure as before will lead you to measuring hoses for the inlet and outlet of the cooler. Tighten the clamps at the thermostat and cooler.



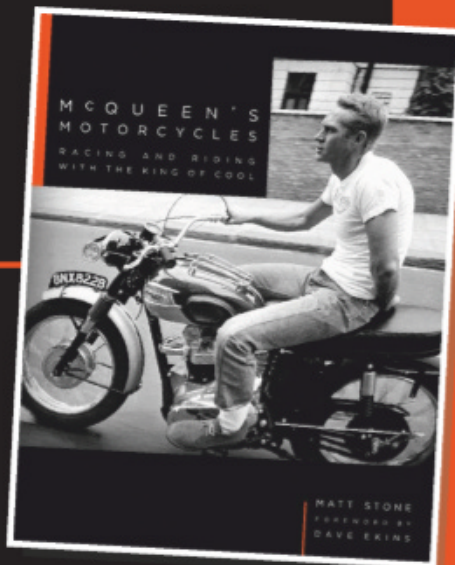
29 Regardless which thermostat you picked, the last step should be priming the hot side of the thermostat to the cooler. This is probably not really necessary, but doesn't take long and avoids any big air bubbles.



30 Here's the finished installation of the Madigan unit.

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“I think for two-up travel you will find the Trident to be smoother running ...”

Yamaha RT1 fork tubes

Q: Hello, Mr. Fellenstein! My name is Tom, and I am a motorbike addict. (There — that's out of the way!) I have acquired — for really short money — an early '70s Yamaha RT1 and it's almost all there, too! I literally got it out of an old barn and it needs a wee bit of polish and suchlike. Most of the parts are still available, although pistons are a bit thin on the ground. My question concerns the fork tubes. They are, of course, pitted. I've looked around on the 'net and in the mags and so forth, but I can't seem to find anyone who replates these things in the U.S. I can get replicas or a set from Frank's, but these are \$400-plus with shipping. I find lots of places doing such work in England or Australia, but shipping is prohibitive. Do you know of a company who rehabs fork tubes in the U.S.? I can't be the only guy in America with this problem! Many thanks for any information that you can provide.

Tom/via email

A: Given the cost of replating, not to mention the possibility that those old forks may have been bent in use back in the day, my advice would be to go with new. I do know of one replating service that you could get an estimate from, qualitychromeplating.com. They advertise in this magazine and offer nationwide service.

Fuel pump issues

Q: Hi, Keith! I'm having fuel issues with my 1985 Suzuki Madura and after spending hours online reading different forums, I've concluded that I probably need a new fuel pump. Problem is I can't seem to find one for my bike anywhere! I read your answer to someone's question about their Madura being hard to start and you suggested a new fuel pump and said that you found an inexpensive one at NAPA. I can't seem to locate any technical info on the stock pump and therefore I don't exactly know what I'm looking for. What did you find at NAPA?

Anthony Valdes/via email

A: It's been so long I can't remember which fuel pump I got at NAPA, but what you want is a 12-volt 3 or 4psi pump. I see that folks are installing



Ready to take your classic queries: Tech Editor Keith Fellenstein.

Yamaha V-Max pumps or copies, and a quick search of eBay shows several choices. Good luck!

Trident or Commando?

Q: Hi, Keith, I enjoy your column and the entire magazine. My wife and I have been riding large touring bikes for the last several decades and now due to age and injuries we find long distances are no longer on our agenda. So I have been thinking about a smaller bike like a Norton Commando or a Triumph Trident. I had a Commando when my wife and I met nearly 40 years ago but always wondered how it compared to a Triple. I would be looking for a '75 electric start of either but would like your opinion as to the pros and cons of each (you can't ask an owner and expect it to be unbiased). Thanks for your help!

Rob Bowen/Fontana, California

A: Rob, I don't know how unbiased I can be since I own one of each of those bikes. My Trident is a 1974 model but I've retrofitted the 1975 electric start parts. It's now so easy to start that it gets ridden more than before. I'm hoping to fit an electric start (Colorado Norton Works) to my 1974 Commando this year, and after that I'll probably sell my 2008 Triumph, affectionately known as “The Appliance.” With two electric start classic bikes, I don't really need the newer one. Like you, I had it to cover longer distances, but find that I don't have the stamina to ride the miles I

used to. I think for two-up travel you would find the Trident to be smoother running, but nothing really beats the torque and sound of the Norton. Horses for courses is the phrase the British use for this situation. I think you'll find the Trident to be the less expensive initial purchase, though the 1975 models are rarer and bring better prices. The Commandos are fairly expensive across the years, at least restorations or reliable runners.

GP kit

Q: Hello, Keith, I hope you don't mind my asking a few questions of you. I just purchased a 1967 Suzuki T20 barn find and it appears that the gas tank and headlight shell are plastic. Would this be correct? Also, can you tell me what the original color options would have been? The bike is very rough and will need extensive work to get it running. Thanks!

Joe Malpezzi/Carlisle, Pennsylvania

A: At first I thought you probably had a bike that had had the gas tank replaced at some time, but as I dug deeper I began to think you have a T20 (X6 Hustler is another name for them) with the GP kit, consisting of fiberglass tank and seat base. Suzukicycles.org has magazine advertising from that model year and more info as to how the bike came to have the tank and seat. We did an article on the more standard configuration T20 (MotorcycleClassics.com/classic-japanese-motorcycles/suzuki-x6-hustler). From what I have seen of the period advertising, they were available in the GP version in blue or red. If you revive this bike, never put any gas in the tank that contains any amount of ethanol; it will dissolve the resin and eventually the tank. Check the tank carefully for soft spots. I'd be inclined to find a steel tank for it and put the glass tank away for show use only.

Email questions to keithsgarage@motorcycleclassics.com or write:

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Learning curves

Hard as it is for me to accept — because it means damn, I’m getting old — I’ve been riding motorcycles for over 40 years. When I got my motorcycle license at the tender age of 18, motorcycle safety classes were still something of a rarity. They were available, but at least in the Midwest, it seemed like most aspirants to the world of two wheels got their “training” on the road, mixing it up out on the street with all the four-wheeled metal boxes fighting for their piece of the asphalt. Like myself, a lot of riders got their first taste of motorcycling in the dirt, the operative word being “taste”: I’ll never forget burying the front wheel of a Honda CB175 in a hidden wash in the tall grass of a hillside, the bike coming to a quick stop while I continued forward over the bars and into the dirt — face first.

Recollections of my first experiences riding motorcycles rushed to the top of my memory bank recently as I watched Jean Denney, group editor of sister publications *Mother Earth Living* and *Heirloom Gardener*, going through the paces of the Basic Rider Course at Kansas City Kansas Community College. Tracking Jean’s progress out on the course, coming to terms with the dynamics of piloting a powered two-wheeler as the instructor guided her and three other women through a series of challenges, I was reminded that riding, at least for most, doesn’t come naturally. It’s a focused exercise, or at least should be, and it benefits from training, a fact too many riders don’t seem to appreciate.

I certainly didn’t, at least not in the beginning. Fresh out of high school, free from the “rents” and ready to start college, I’d been scheming to get the bike my mother wouldn’t hear of. So when I went into the DMV on my 18th birthday to update my auto license and the bored woman behind the green IBM Selectric asked, “You want a motorcycle license?” I said, “Sure, what’s it take?” “Fifty cents.” Fifty cents? That’s it? Hell yeah. No test, just two quarters handed over to the lady at the DMV. And I’d never ridden anything bigger than a minibike.

The riders in Jean’s group had each shelled out \$225, and watching them being put to work to understand the nature of the machines they were hoping would open doors to new experiences, it was clear it was money well spent. I’ve watched more than a few new would-be riders, usually encouraged by a misguided friend or mate, try to make their first launch on a bike, and with predictable results: With no

training or real understanding of what they’re doing, they crash within 50 feet. Jean’s group was in a controlled environment. Removed from the stress of lurching out onto the streets like weak-kneed newborn calves ready to fall over, they could grapple with the unfamiliar in an environment that let them focus completely on the task at hand.

No doubt there are differences in the experiences. Age is a big one. I was young when I got my license, mentally and physically agile, and eager for the challenge. Jean is 56 (the youngest in her group was 39, the oldest in her early 60s). And while she’s mentally and physically fit, there’s no questioning that we don’t process information — or move our bodies — as quickly when we’re older. Jean’s been going for rides with me on the back of my bike for a few years, so when she expressed an interest in learning to ride herself I was cautiously enthusiastic. Few people take up a new sport when they are older, and at many levels that’s what motorcycling is. It’s a physical and mental challenge that requires engagement. It involves exposure and risk, and physical and mental competence if you’re going to be safe.

As Jean and more than a few others in the class discovered, if your bike falls over, you have to pick it up. And when you do, you need to understand the physics of using your 140-pound body to right a 400-pound machine.

Riding is one of the great joys of life for me, whether I’m on a wheezy little 2-stroke or a thumping twin. And every ride brings new experiences that teach me how to be a better rider. The unexpected rain storm, the blacktop road that suddenly turns to gravel, the wrong turn that takes me onto the wrong road with

too many trucks — every inch

of it is a potential learning experience that can return dividends. No doubt Jean and the other students in her class were filled with a certain terror as rain started falling on their last morning of training, but their instructor made them ride through it, in the process helping them discover they could ride in the wet, no worse for the wear. Without planning, an unexpected negative turned into a positive piece of their learning curve.

Jean passed the class, and she’s looking forward to getting in some real street time. I guess it’s time to tune up the ’76 Suzuki GT185, a perfect learner street bike if ever there was one, for Jean to continue her education. Ride safe.



Backus and his
1973 BMW R75/5.

Richard Backus
Founding Editor

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Motocross essentials: Arai VX-Pro4 helmet, Maxima Castor 927 oil and Dunlop Geomax tires



Arai VX-Pro4

This family-owned Japanese company has handcrafted premium helmets for car racers and motorcyclists for decades. Their latest offroad lid is the VX-Pro4. Purposefully devoid of fancy aero aids or edgy shapes, the VX-Pro4's smooth, organic shape reduces the chance of the helmet snagging on the ground in a crash, thus reducing the chance of imparting rotational forces to the brain. Using a single multi-density EPS inner liner, instead of dual concentric inner liners of some competitors, keeps helmet exterior dimensions smaller, further reducing torque transfer in a fall. The shell is hand laid-up with proprietary fiber belts, which are designed like a car unibody to channel impact loads most beneficially. As usual for Arai helmets, comfort is simply top-notch. \$610 to \$750. More info: araiamericas.com
— John L. Stein



Maxima Castor 927

The commonality between all vintage racers must surely be love for the olfactory cocktail of race gas and castor oil. The former, to provide the octane necessary for racing engines, and the latter for its robust film strength, lubricating properties under stress, and fortitude in high temperatures. Mixed 32:1 with race gas, Maxima's Castor 927 delivered all the lubrication needed for our racing weekend — while also delivering the best racing smell in class. (Which definitely counts, if you want the authentic vintage race experience.) Maxima Synthetic Chain Guard went on the chains after each moto; it goes on clear, creeps quickly inside the rollers, sticks rabidly and doesn't mess up surrounding parts. Afterwards, Maxima Bio Wash made cleanup easy. \$8 to \$11. More info: maximausa.com — John L. Stein



Dunlop Geomax MX33

Dunlop has won more American pro motocross titles than any other tire, and the Buffalo, New York, based U.S. division keeps moving forward with new designs to stay ahead. The latest is the Geomax MX33. Available for rim sizes from 10 to 21 inches, they are intended for soft to intermediate (e.g., sandy, loamy or muddy) terrain and are sized to fit everything from minis to top-tier 450s. Anticipating rainy weather and sandy Arizona soil, we fitted MX33s to the wheelsets of both the Yamaha 125 and OSSA 250 prior to heading to the AHRMA national (see *Down and Dirty*, p. 20 of this issue). The tires are improved throughout, from the carcass to sidewall, and from the "block in a block" knob design to the rubber compound to maximize grip, stability and shock absorption.

In practice I experimented with 12.5psi on both ends, then dropped the pressure to 11psi for the races. The tires hooked up nicely early in the day when the track still had standing muddy sections, through the ruts and braking bumps that formed midday, and even on the sketchy hard-pack that developed as the motos wore on. Takeaway: Although the Geomax MX33 tire is an intermediate- and soft-terrain tire, it performed unequivocally in the wide-ranging conditions we experienced. \$46 to \$150. More info: dunlopmotorcycletires.com
— John L. Stein

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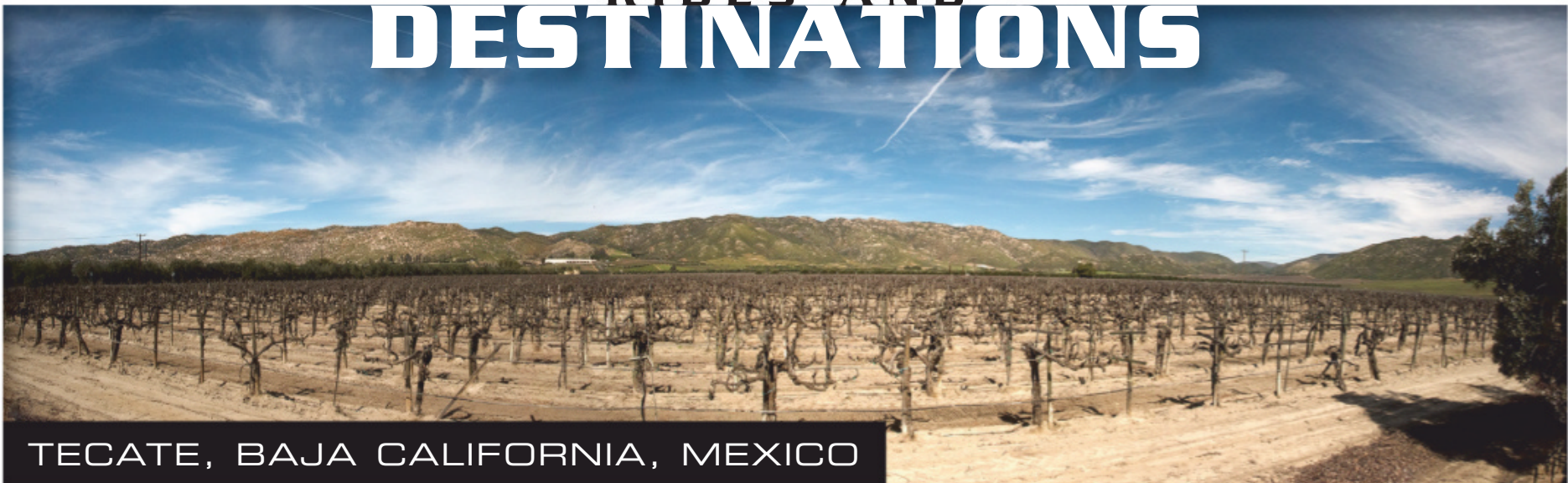
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RIDES AND DESTINATIONS



TECATE, BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

Tecate, home to the cerveza company of the same name, is a gritty industrial town, but scratch the surface and you'll find a grand destination and a good jumping-off point for further Baja exploration. On the U.S. side, Tecate is not much more than the U.S. Customs and Immigration station; on the Mexican side, Tecate (pop. 102,000) is a much larger and far more intriguing place. Founded in 1892, Tecate's history reaches back 12,000 years when the region was settled by the Kumeyaay Native Americans who still inhabit the area.

Getting to Tecate is a beautiful ride in itself. California SR 94 twistiliciously winds its way through the mountains just north of the border. Roughly 25 miles east of where 94 originates near San Diego, take a right on 2-mile-long SR 188 and you're there. There's a sign warning you not to bring guns into Mexico (duh), and suddenly, you're crossing the border. There are no Mexican officials or inspections as you enter; you just ride right in. You can do that going south; don't try it going north.

You should get a Mexican visitor's permit (FMM). The Mexican immigration office is the first building on the right. Bounce over the Botts' dots (those annoying grapefruit-sized metal domes), find a place to park, walk across the road

you just rode in on, walk back to the Mexican customs building (there's no sign), walk through a gate, cross back again, look for the steps and enter the Mexican immigration office. Just wander around looking like you're lost (you won't have to act, because you will be), and somebody will ask if you need help. I get the feeling not too many people actually get a permit when they enter Mexico. But you're supposed to.

Tecate stretches out like a fat "T" along the border. Head west on Federal Highway 2 and you'll run into Tijuana (although why anyone would want to do that is beyond me). Turn left to head east on Fed. 2 (or 2D) for a magnificent ride through the Rumarosa Grade on your way to Mexicali and San Felipe (see *MC's Destinations*, November/December 2013). Be prepared, however; Fed. 2D is a toll road.

Ride straight ahead down the long part of that letter T and dive deeper into Baja on Fed. 3, which becomes northern Baja's Ruta del Vino. It's a beautiful road through the northern Baja wine country, not unlike Napa Valley (although much less expensive). I don't do any tasting when I'm riding, but I've purchased northern Baja wines and they are as good or better as any in the world. I particularly like L.A. Cetto's wines and olive oil (that's one of their vineyards in the photo at the top).

My advice is to spend at least one night in Tecate and enjoy the town's best kept secret, which is the cuisine. Two restaurants that stand out are Amores for dinner and Malinalli Sabores Autóctonos for breakfast. Amores, nestled between the central plaza and the Tecate brewery, features local foods and wines. Malinalli Sabores Autóctonos, next to the Hotel Hacienda on Avenida Revolución (my favorite place to stay), has exquisite regional Mexican recipes. Don't think salsa and chips; this is the real deal and the cuisine is both exceptional and inexpensive.

Tecate is dominated by the brewery in the center of town (you can see it from just about anywhere). The brewery used to offer tours and I tried to get one, but a worker told me the tours are no more. Sensing my disappointment, my new *compadre* said the Tecate beer garden was still open, but it was well-hidden (he was right, I couldn't find it).

There are plenty of gas stations in northern Baja and in Tecate the stations take credit cards (that's not always the case farther south). Until recently, Pemex stations were the only ones in Mexico. Being a state-run company, Pemex ran out of money for exploration (and then they ran out of gas), so in 2016 Mexico allowed foreign oil companies to set up shop. There are BP, Chevron and ARCO stations in Tecate. — Joe Berk

THE SKINNY

What: Tecate, Baja California, Mexico, and the roads to and from this magnificent destination.

How to Get There: Take I-15 or I-5 to I-8, pick up California SR 94 and turn south on SR 188.

Best Kept Secret: Unquestionably, the exquisite dining experiences in Tecate (see above).

Avoid: Forgetting your passport (if you want to get back into the *Estados Unidos*), returning to the U.S. with more than one bottle of wine (the U.S. limit) and entering Mexico without insurance (we recommend bajabound.com).

More Photos: exhaustnotes.us/blog

More Info: visitmexico.com/en/main-destinations/baja-california/tecate



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Don't miss these upcoming events!

7/5 AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days returns to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, July 5-7, 2019. Enjoy the AMA Vintage Road Racing Grand Championships along with motocross, hare scrambles, trials and flat track racing. The event includes America's largest motorcycle swap meet, the Wall of Death, bike shows, stunt shows, demo rides, seminars and more. More info: amavintagemotorcycledays.com

8/9 Join the editors of *Motorcycle Classics* for the 4th Annual Ride 'Em, Don't Hide 'Em Getaway, Aug. 9-11. We'll enjoy a relaxed weekend of riding and sightseeing in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania and stay at Seven Springs Mountain Resort, meeting up Friday and riding through the weekend. More info: MotorcycleClassics.com/PA2019

8/30 Back for its 14th year, join in the fun at the Bonneville Vintage GP, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, at the Utah Motorsports Campus in Tooele, Utah. The *Motorcycle Classics* Vintage Motorcycle Show will take place on Saturday, featuring the 60th anniversary of the Triumph Bonneville (1959-2019), plus trophies in six classes and a People's Choice award. Sunday will feature the Tintic Motorcycle Works and Museum bike show. Both days will feature AHRMA racing, with CB160 races with LeMans starts both days. More info: bonnevillevintagegp.com



Check out the Wall of Death at AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, July 5-7, 2019.

Motorcycle Classics wants to know about classic motorcycle shows, swap meets, road runs and more. Send details of upcoming events at least three months in advance to lhall@motorcycleclassics.com

July 5-7 — British Motorcycle Owners Club of Canada 36th Annual Vintage MC Rally and Camp Out. Kootenay Lake, Riondel, British Columbia, Canada. bmoc.ca

July 12-14 — 28th Annual MGNOC Iowa Rally. Elkader, IA. mgnoc.com

July 12-14 — New York Moto Guzzi Rally. Mountain View, NY. mgnoc.com

July 19-21 — 39th Annual British Biker Cooperative Rally and Show. Blue River, WI. britishbiker.net

July 28 — Jeff Williams MC Swap Meet. Twin Drive-In, Kansas City, MO. jwswapmeet.com

Aug. 2-4 — 24th Annual Damn Yankees Rally. Heath Fairground, Heath, MA. bmwra.org

Aug. 2-4 — 35th Annual Wisconsin Moto Guzzi Riders Rally. Lake Joy Campground, Belmont, WI. wmgr.org

Aug. 3 — 7th Annual Kansas City VJMC Rally. New Century, KS. kcvjmc.com

Aug. 3-4 — Ohio Valley BSA Owners Club 38th Annual Rally. Toronto, OH. ohiovalleybsaownersclub.com

Aug. 10 — 3rd Annual Kansas City All 2-Stroke Rally. Lee's Summit, MO. kcvjmc.com

Aug. 15-18 — MGNOC 28th New Mexico State Rally. Datil, NM. mgnoc.com

Aug. 18 — British Iron Association of Connecticut 34th Annual Brit Jam. Haddam Neck Fairgrounds, East Hampton, CT. ctbritiron.org

Aug. 23-25 — Ontario Guzzi Riders Rally. Lavigne, Ontario, Canada. mgnoc.com

Aug. 24-29 — Bonneville Motorcycle Speed Trials AMA Land Speed Grand Championship. Wendover, UT. bonneville-speedtrials.com

Aug. 25 — Jeff Williams MC Swap Meet. Kansas City, MO. jwswapmeet.com

Aug. 27-31 — GWRRA Wing Ding 41. Nashville, TN. wing-ding.org

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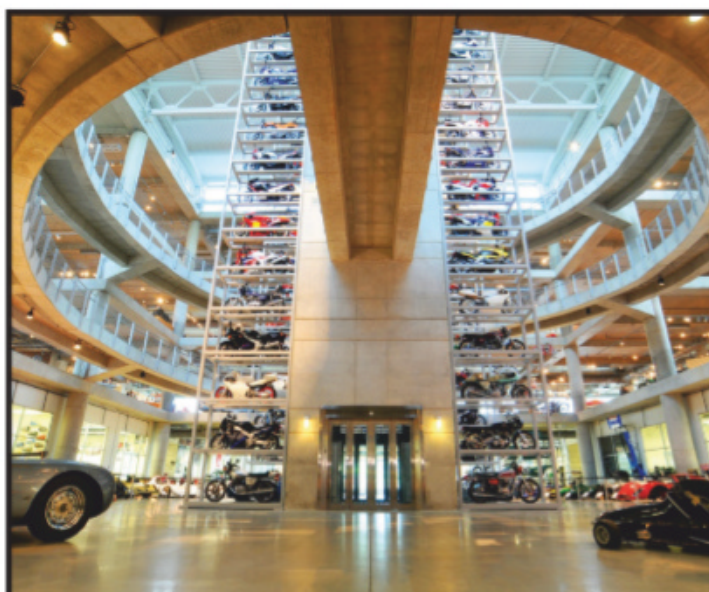
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Circle #6; see card pg 81



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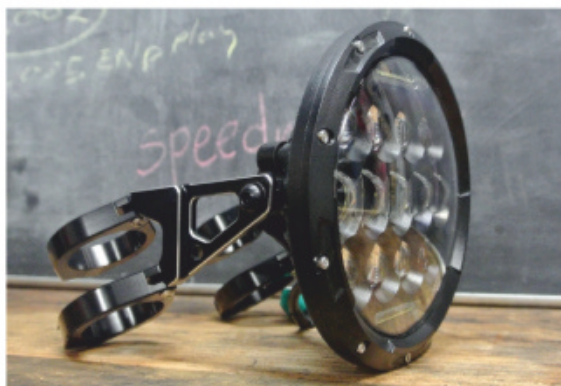
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New Stuff for Old Bikes

From lighting up the way, to searching all of Craigslist at once, here are six new products every classic bike fan should know about.



Speed Moto 13 LED projector headlight with brackets

If you need a replacement headlight and are considering something with modern looks, this may be the device for you. Available bracket size options range from 32mm to 58mm with some split sizes. At 10-30 volts and 75 watts, this fixture was made with old "lazy" charging systems in mind. The housing is made of cast aluminum, and the lights will net you 4,000 lumens, quite brighter than average car headlights. \$149.95. More info: speedmotoco.com



Winchester jacket from Highway 21

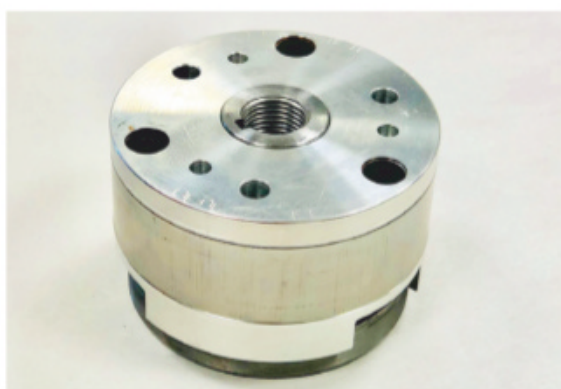
While this jacket looks like a mid-century field jacket, beneath the poly/nylon shell is removable CE armor in the shoulders and elbows. It also includes a removable PE back protector. For storage, there are four large front cargo pockets with snap closures. If you're packing heat, there is a dedicated concealed-carry pocket with a sturdy elastic barrel loop. Also perfect for a paperback.

Look for a forthcoming review. \$149.95. More info: highway21.com



Haynes Service & Repair Manual

This manual for the devout DIYer and the uninitiated covers some of Royal Enfield's most popular models from '09 to '18. It is replete with checklists, milestones and reminders for maintenance and repair. It reads like an ownership companion: Everything from pre-ride checks to a gear shaft overhaul are included. Tool suggestions, tips and methods are explained in detail with plenty of step-by-step photos. \$40.95. More info: haynes.com



Hot Shot rotor from Rick's Motorsport Electrics

Looking for an OEM part that's been discontinued? Us, too. If you are restoring a Honda CB 350/360 and need a new alternator rotor, you can stop looking (it's always in the last place you look, ain't it?). Rick's Motorsport Electrics in Hampstead, New Hampshire, has them. The Hot Shot rotor works with Honda's stock stator and has the stock timing marks. Claimed is an increase in power and battery life, and a chart on their website shows the Hot Shot's output improvement over stock.

\$159.95. More info: ricksmotorsportelectrics.com



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Circle #4; see card pg 81

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Circle #10; see card pg 81

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Circle #8; see card pg 81

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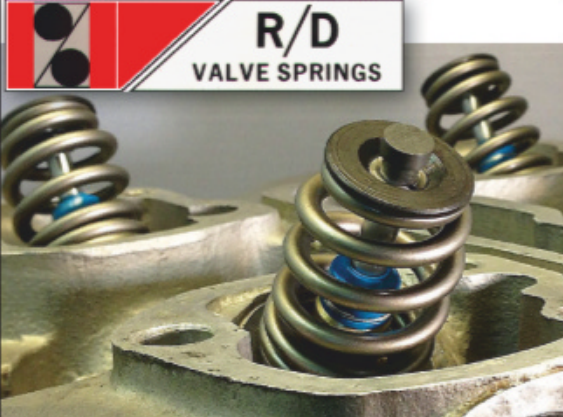
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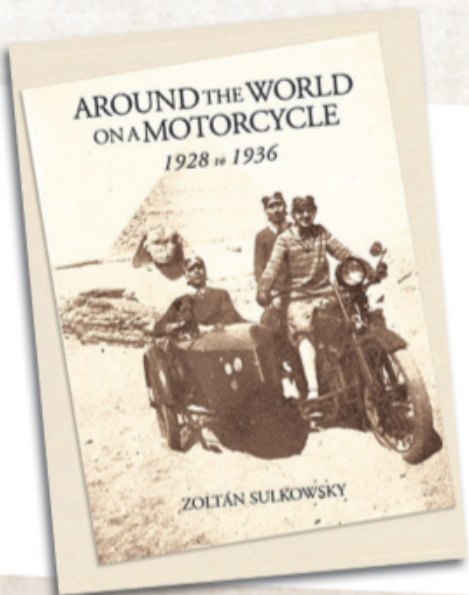
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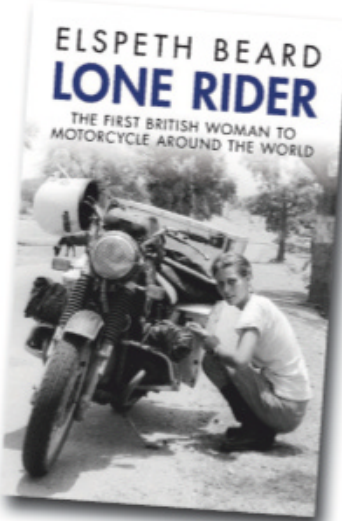
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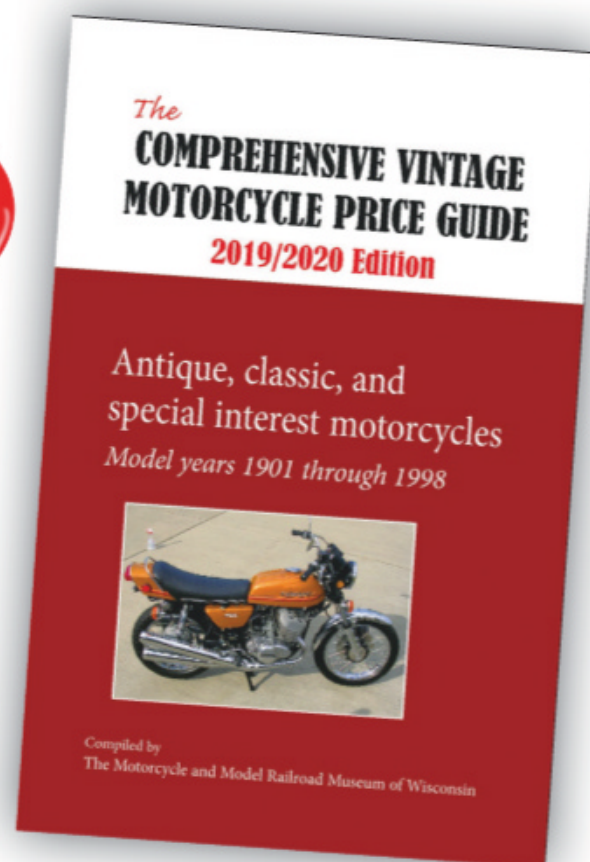
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THE COMPREHENSIVE VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE PRICE GUIDE 2019-2020, 16TH EDITION

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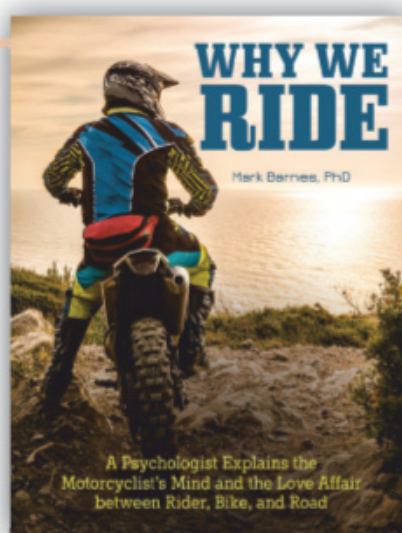
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THE ART OF BMW MOTORCYCLES

The Art of BMW Motorcycles presents the rolling sculptures that are BMW motorcycles in studio portraits, each bike accompanied by a short history of the machine. From the first model to the latest, this book captures nearly a century of motorcycling excellence.

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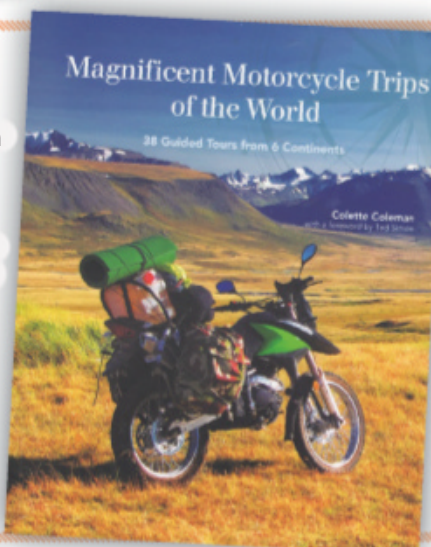
Why We Ride serves as an anthem for those who do and an explanation for those who don't. The book presents the insights of Mark Barnes, a motorcycling clinical psychologist, as he articulates the elusive physical, emotional, and interpersonal elements that make the world of the motorcyclist such a rich and exciting place.

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MAGNIFICENT MOTORCYCLE TRIPS OF THE WORLD

Featuring 40 spectacular routes from the snowy passes of Patagonia to Australia's Red Centre, this book is the perfect inspiration for your next big motorcycling adventure. Full of stunning photography and route maps showing points of interest along the way, the guide focuses on journeys that are accessible to everyone.

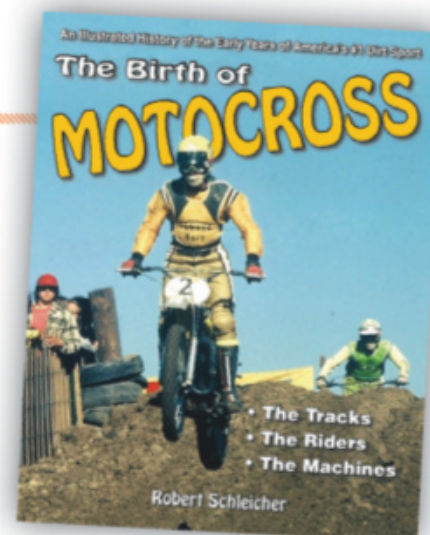
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THE BIRTH OF MOTOCROSS

This is the story of the beginning of what has become America's No. 1 dirt sport, from the time when Motocross was "imported" into America, first as the "Inter-Am" series in 1968-'69, then as the "Trans-Am" series in 1970. During this era, freelance writer and photographer Robert Schleicher traveled to the most famous tracks in America to cover the new-to-America Motocross races. Usually with only a snow fence separating him from the competitors, Schleicher was able to dramatically capture the intense battles between the best European riders and the brash new Americans, all documented in this book! *While supplies last!*

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DUCATI BEVEL TWINS 1971 TO 1986: AUTHENTICITY & RESTORATION GUIDE

If you are a Ducati enthusiast, *Ducati Bevel Twins* is the perfect addition to your library! Although built in relatively small numbers, there are many individual model differences that can make their authentic restoration difficult. This comprehensive book features a complete historical background, detailed descriptions of individual model differences, restoration tips

and guidance based on years of practical experience, correct information for decal placement, guides to colors and paint codes, and advice for finding the right motorcycle.

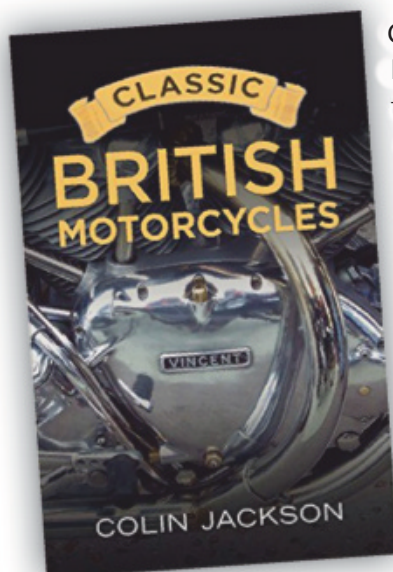
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DUCATI 916

The 916 spearheaded the Ducati revival of the 1990s. Introduced at the end of 1993, this product took the water-cooled four-valve engine of the 851 and placed it in an evolutionary chassis with revolutionary styling. The 916 immediately set new standards of performance for twin-cylinder machines. This book traces the development of the four-valve Ducati from its first appearance at the Bol d'Or in 1986. Along with the factory racers, all the related four-valve models are covered in depth. All the variants, including the Sport Production series, are detailed, along with the rare Supermono. This book is your definitive guide to these legendary Ducati models.

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CLASSIC BRITISH MOTORCYCLES

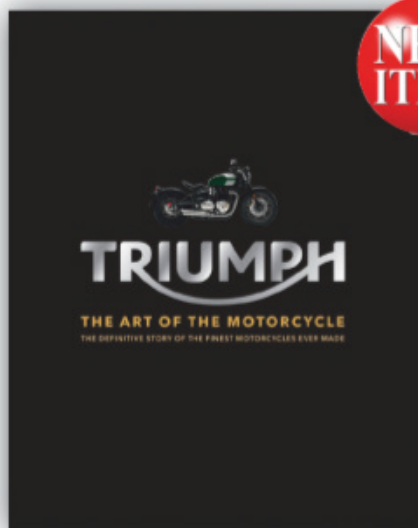
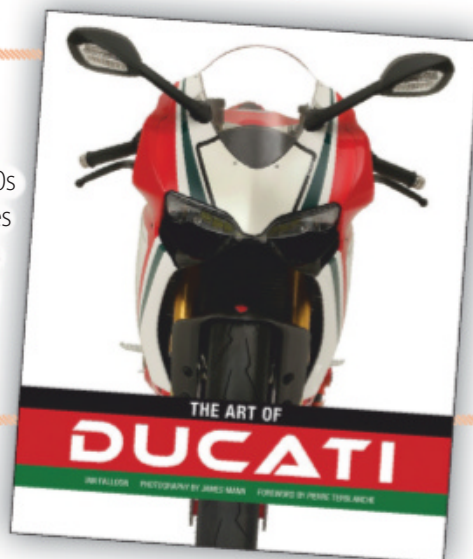
In the modern era, mass-produced motorcycles tend to be Japanese or Italian, with the "big four" Asian manufacturers dominating the market. However, until the 1950s, and even into the '60s, British makers such as Norton and Vincent ruled the roost. These legendary companies, and many smaller British firms, are motorcycling's founding companies. Superbly illustrated with more than 150 color pictures, many previously unpublished, this book is a captivating and highly informative account of the men, machines, race meetings, and world events that shaped the development of the motorcycle from its bicycle origins. *While supplies last!*

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chronological look at the most important and exquisite Triumph motorcycles, from its founding to the launch of the latest machine.

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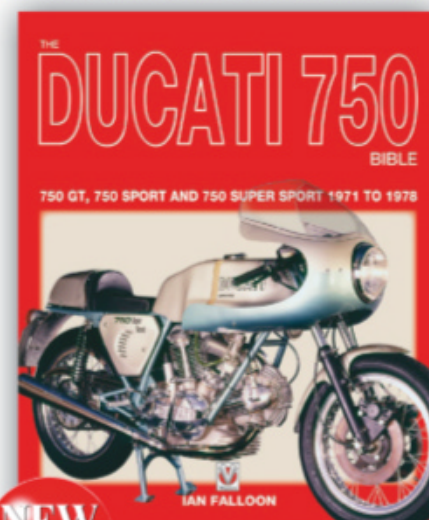
This package is perfect for anyone who wants an inside look at the great bikes made in the '60s and '70s. Read all about the 1966 Honda CB450K0 "Black Bomber" or the 1969 Ducati 350 Mark 3 D that defined the '60s, and gain new insight about the bikes of the '70s like the Honda GL1000, Gold Wing and the Suzuki GS1000.

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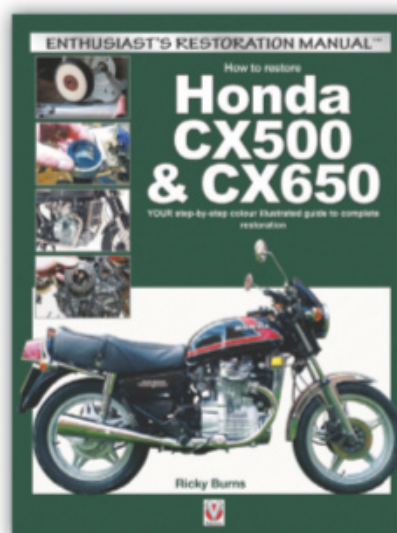
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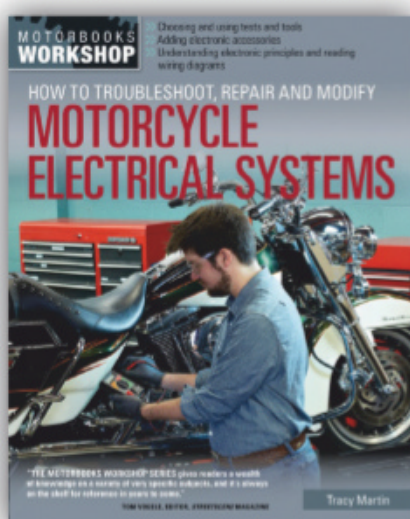
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The Ducati Story is brought right up to date in this new edition of Ian Falloon's authoritative book, covering the complete history of the marque. Initially under government control, Ducati went through several decades of ups and downs, characterized by dubious managerial decisions. Held together by the great engineer Fabio Taglioni, the father of desmodromic valve gear, Ducati produced some of the finest motorcycles of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Read all about these amazing bikes from beginning to end plus, this new edition includes a brand new chapter featuring all the models from 2012 up to 2018.

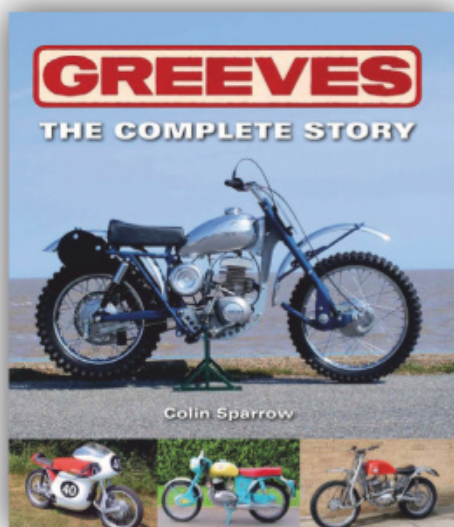
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THE ESSENTIAL BUYER'S GUIDE KAWASAKI Z1 & Z900

The Essential Buyer's Guide: Kawasaki Z1 & Z900 is packed with great advice to help you choose the right Kawasaki. Covering the Z1, Z1A, Z1B, Z900 and KZ900 from 1972 to 1976, author Dave Orritt informs you on desirable upgrades, modifications to avoid, valuation and predicting which models will become collectable. Illustrated throughout with photos, this is the complete guide to choosing, assessing and buying the Kawasaki of your dreams. *While Supplies Last!*

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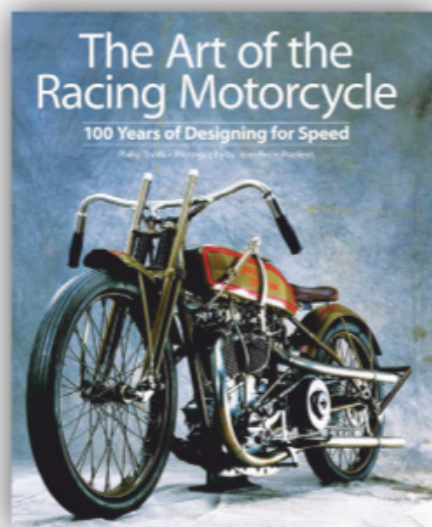
In twenty-five years, Greeves produced only around 25,000-30,000 machines. However, Greeves was not small in ambition or achievement, which is resoundingly illustrated in this quality book. *Greeves: The Complete Story* gives you a detailed history from the early 1950s to the 1970s. With production histories and specification details for all main models, this book is the ideal Greeves resource for anyone interested in classic sporting motorcycles. *While Supplies Last!*

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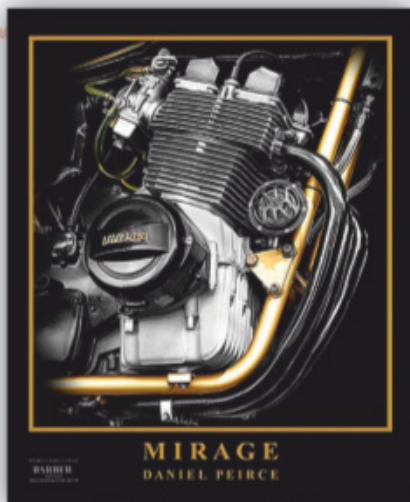
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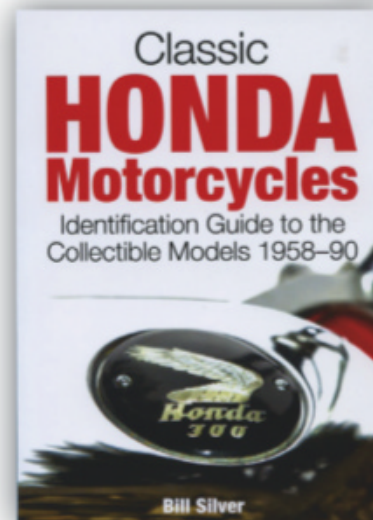
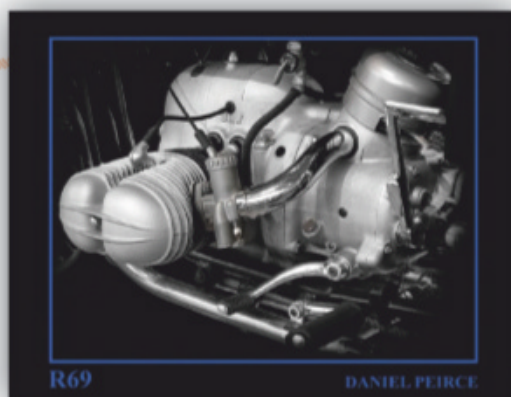
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Wheelie big show ... wheely

What's the longest wheelie you've ever pulled on a motorcycle? Fifty feet? A football field? Perhaps a full mile?

Doug Domokos, aka the Wheelie King, rode a bike for 145 miles without letting the front tire even so much as dab the pavement. That was a Guinness World Record, one he set in 1984 at Talladega Superspeedway aboard a Honda dirt bike that he modified for sustained one-wheel travel.

The year before, the Wheelie King played like King Kong, riding on one wheel at the top of the Empire State Building — a stunt he termed the World's Tallest Wheelie, although there's no account of that being a bona fide world record. At the least, we should consider it a bona fide "tall tale," one that afforded him further acclaim within the motorcycle community at the time.

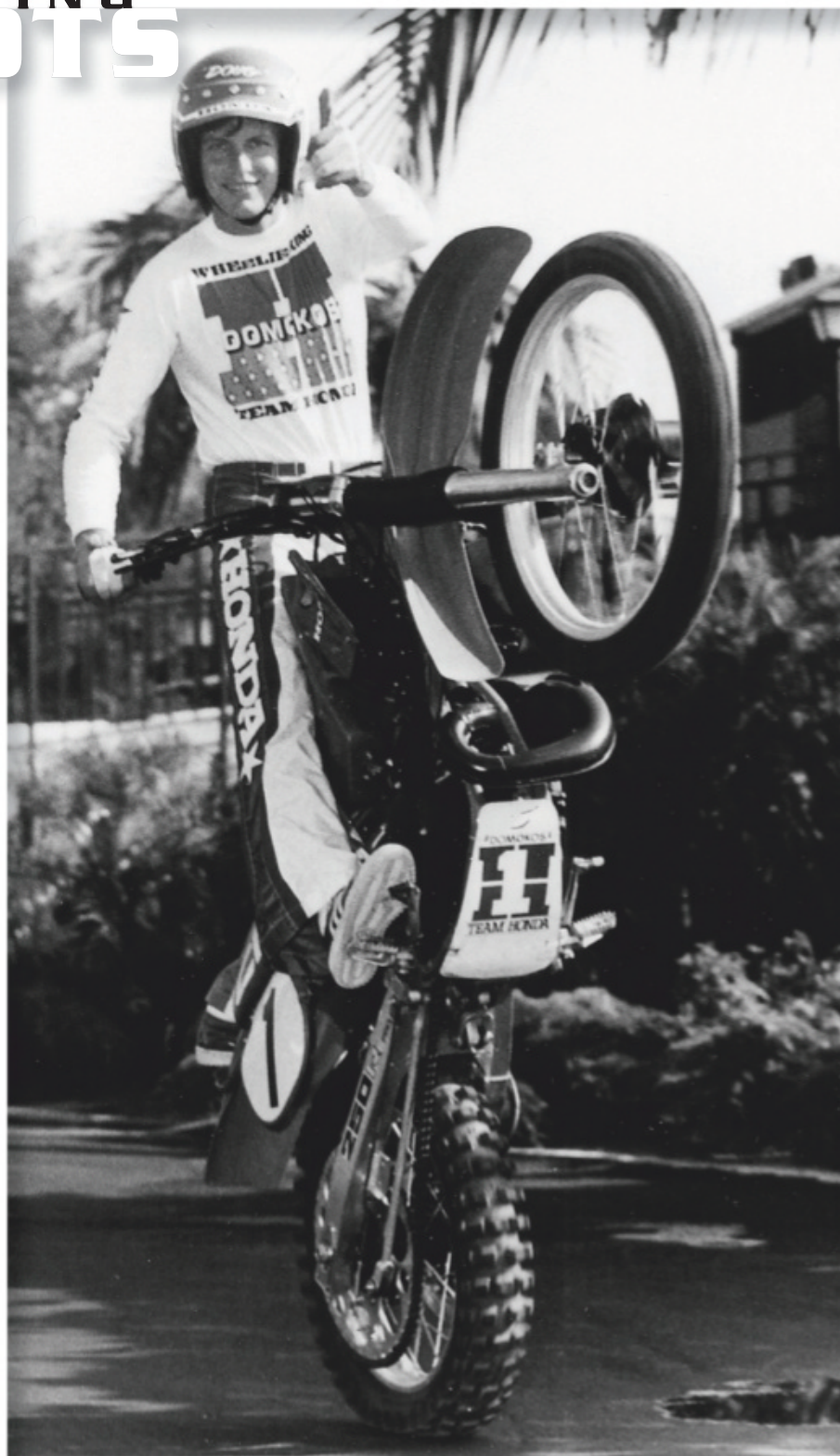
But whether he was setting wheelie world records, or simply playing around in a parking lot, Domokos proved to be an especially colorful and charismatic character. He first rose to national prominence in 1978 when, prompted by Kawasaki factory team motocross racer "Jammin' Jimmy" Weinert, Kawasaki Motor Corp. agreed to support the young man from Michigan with modified KX250 dirt bikes and a pickup truck. Armed with first-class equipment, Domokos set out to showcase his talent at Supercross races, among other venues, during the coming months. As the story goes, famed Supercross promoter Mike Goodwin once bet Domokos that he couldn't wheelie the entire distance of the Anaheim SX course, considered to be among the premier tracks on the schedule. One lap later the Wheelie King collected a cool \$10,000 from Goodwin.

Domokos also was an innovator. To assist his own natural sense of balance, he rigged an electric motor inside his bike's front hub to keep the wheel spinning forward after lofting it into the air. The gyroscopic stability it provided helped Domokos perform tricks that delighted crowds around the world. His fan base included the Emperor of Japan, and he was a celebrity in Europe as well, often taking his show to the streets of Continental cities that invited him to perform for the public. He also was an enthusiastic supporter of charity events, donating not only money and his riding talents to charity, but his time to visit patients in hospitals.

I once asked Domokos if popping wheelies was tough to do. He replied, "Practically anybody can do a wheelie. The trick is keeping it [the front wheel] up for a long period of time."

Sadly, the Wheelie King's wheelie shows came to an abrupt end, Nov. 26, 2000, when he, along with his flight instructor, lost their lives in an ultralight plane crash. Both were killed on impact. Two years later the Wheelie King, fittingly, was inducted into the AMA Hall of Fame.

— Dain Gingerelli



Wheelie King Doug Domokos on his Honda XR 250R (above). He traveled the world, often performing in the streets (below).



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